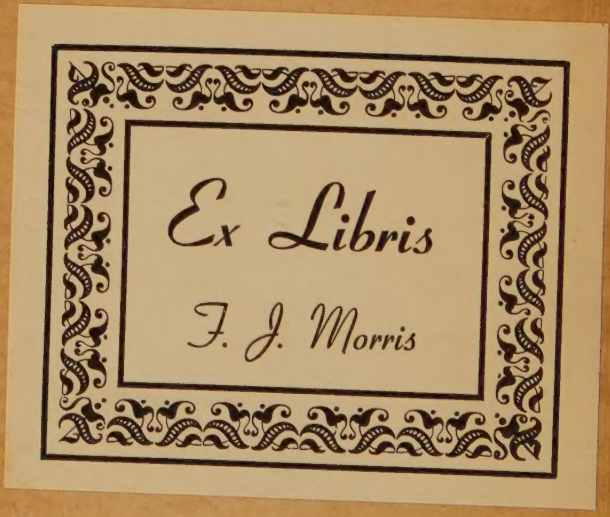
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PEOPLES AND PROBLEMS OF INDIA

BY
SIR T. W. HOLDERNESS, K.C.S.I.

LONDON
WILLIAMS & NORGATE

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following pages were printed off before the announcement at the Delhi Coronation Durbar (December 12, 1911) of the decision of His Majesty's Government to transfer the seat of the Government of India from Calcutta to the ancient capital of Delhi, and simultaneously to make, in modification of the partition of 1905, extensive changes in the government of Bengal. The declared object of these measures is to give greater autonomy to provincial governments, to recognise provincial sentiment and aspirations, and to relieve the central government of direct responsibility for provincial affairs. These principles are discussed and their importance recognised in the present work.

PEOPLES AND PROBLEMS OF INDIA

CHAPTER I

THE COUNTRY

A COUNTRY makes its inhabitants in more senses than one. This is true of India.

In the first place a country must be able to sustain inhabitants, or they will not exist. There is a natural limit to its population. At one extreme is the Sahara desert, at the other the Nile valley. In India both extremes are found. The native state of Jaisalmir in western Rajputana can barely support a population of under five persons to the square mile. In the Gangetic plain 500 to the square mile is of common occurrence. We are speaking of course of purely agricultural tracts. Where manufactures exist which can be exchanged for food, the case is different.

Again, a country may be said to make its inhabitants in that their faculties and dispositions are largely influenced by

its physical and climatic conditions. The statement that man is the product of his surroundings is qualified by the fact that race has a great resisting power. The qualities of race will often persist in the face of adverse circumstances. The many races that make up the population of India maintain their distinctive characters, though for centuries they have lived side by side. None the less India has stamped them with a common seal, and has wrought out a recognisable type amid a great profusion of species.

Lastly, a country makes its inhabitants so far as it determines their political history. The fertility of a country may prove its ruin, if accompanied by a soft and languid climate which saps the energies and weakens the combative instincts of the inhabitants. Of this Egypt is an instructive example. It has passed from one conqueror to another until it has lost the consciousness of national life. India, like Egypt, has been the coveted prize of the strong. But unlike Egypt it has in the long run absorbed its invaders and maintained its own civilisation. It has been able to do this because its natural frontiers have protected it from invasion except at one or two points. These points are so distant from the centre that invasions of India always lost something of their first impetus before they could be pressed home.

" India," as we use the word, denotes the whole of the sub-continent which is cut off by the Himalaya mountains from the rest of Asia. Its derivation is interesting. It comes from the sanskrit " Sindhu " (literally " river " or " flood "), and this was the name given by the early Aryan invaders of India to the great river on which they settled when they entered the plains country from the highlands of central Asia. To-day this river is the Indus. To the Aryan settlers it was " the river "—the sign and symbol of their new possessions. With its great tributaries it is still the most important feature of northern India. The coming of the Aryans into India is distant three thousand or four thousand years, and we have no clear record of their settlement. But their sacrificial hymns are preserved in the sanskrit Rig Veda, " the first word spoken by Aryan man," and thus we know that the Aryans were a branch of the Indo-European stock and spoke a language closely allied to the languages of Greeks, Romans, Celts and Germans. Their first settlements were confined to northern India. To them the new country was simply the land of the Indus. Their later hymns show that as they spread eastwards and southwards, expelling or enslaving dark-hued primitive races, their idea of the country expanded. They then knew it as the land of the Indus

and the Ganges. We will not here pursue their later fortunes. The point of interest in this early glimpse of India is that we see it in the act of being invaded by hardy people from the north. This fact is imbedded in the name "India." The history of India is a repetition of this fact.

"India" thus meant originally the great river; then the region watered by that river (the Indus) and its tributaries. We may see in this the notion, natural in dry eastern countries, that it is water alone that makes land of value. This is strictly true of the greater part of India. Without the Indus and its streams the plains of northern India would be uncultivated and uninhabitable. The same truth is expressed in the name "Punjab." The province bearing this name which stretches from the Indus on the west to the Gangetic plain on the east is literally "the land of the five rivers."

We may glance at another ancient word which is of much import to India. It is impossible to imagine the Indian continent without the Himalayan mountains. They were much in the minds of the early Aryan settlers. "Himālăya" in Sanskrit meant "the place of snow." As the rivers of northern India gave food and pasturage to the immigrants from central Asia, so the snowy rampart that closed them in on the north

gave food to their imagination. They placed the seats of their gods in the Himalaya, and they saw in them the mysterious source of their beloved rivers. The ice-cave in which the Ganges rises among the high snows became to later fancy the matted locks of Siva, the great god of life and death. Other wild and fantastic legends of the same kind show how deeply the minds of the early Aryan settlers were impressed by the grandeur of the Himalaya. The instinct was a right one. It anticipated the reverence with which we with ampler knowledge regard these inaccessible peaks. In them are fashioned the rivers which give life to the plains of India. The melting of their snows in the early summer causes these rivers to rise and thus provides an unfailing supply of water for the great canals that irrigate the country. Later on in the year the Himalaya play another part. They intercept the vapour-laden winds as they blow across India from the equator, and compel them to discharge their burden in fertilising rain. The historian sees in the Himalaya a wall of seclusion which has kept Indian civilisation as a thing apart and given it a unique flavour. The statesman views them as the barrier between the warm and fertile plains of India and hungry prowlers without. The barrier, as will be seen, can be turned at either end. But for all that it

is the strongest and most remarkable mountain barrier in the world.

"Monsoon" is another word of vital import to India. It comes from an Arabian word meaning "times" or "seasons." A monsoon wind is a seasonal wind, that is, one that blows continuously from a certain quarter during a certain period of the year; and a monsoon region is one in which the climate is entirely controlled by winds of this kind. India is such a region. It has well-defined seasons of rain and clear skies, and these depend upon conditions of atmosphere and temperature not in India itself, but in the Indian ocean and adjacent lands. Broadly speaking nearly the whole rainfall of India is confined to about three or four months of the year. From March to June the Indian continent heats up and the pressure of the air over the heated surface becomes less than that over the Indian ocean. Similar conditions prevail in Africa. A strong indraught is thus established in the land masses north of the equator, and currents of air laden with moisture from the southern seas pour across the line, and bring about the rainy season. In the greater part of India this season lasts from the middle of June to the middle or end of September. In southern India somewhat different conditions prevail, and the rainfall is chiefly in the later months of the

year. If the monsoon current is of normal strength and persistency, the harvests will be good and the cultivator will rejoice. If it is weak and short-lived there is drought and "famine." The monsoon therefore is the dominating fact in the Indian year. Not only does the monsoon current vary in strength from year to year, but its distribution in India itself is extremely unequal. It is a thing of twists and turns, very sensitive to local conditions. If it strikes hills it dissolves in sheets of rain, but over a flat country it passes without expending a shower. A large part of north-western India for instance is practically rainless—either desert or dependent on irrigation from the snow-fed rivers. Bengal and Assam in the east are tracts of superabundant rain. There are other tracts where the rainfall is just sufficient; and others where it is precarious and often deficient.

The map of Asia shows India as a large irregular triangle projecting southwards into the Indian ocean. Relatively to the rest of Asia the sub-continent looks small. But it is larger than Europe without Russia and contains one-fifth of the human race. It is not one country, as we know countries in Europe, but many countries. Its southern extremity is within ten degrees of the equator. Its most northerly point is about the latitude

of Lisbon. The two points are distant from each other nearly two thousand miles. From extreme east to extreme west along the northern boundary the distance is equally great. In so extensive a region there is room for many climates, and in fact India in this respect presents greater contrasts than do the countries of Europe. An Englishman who travels through Europe to southern Greece is struck by the variety of climates through which he passes. But he would be much more struck by the contrast which the Malabar coast with its beauty and tropical luxuriance presents to the treeless plains of the Punjab, or the hills and glades of central India to the rice fields and palm groves of lower Bengal. The difference is not merely in scenery but in every climatic condition. In Malabar there is the perpetual summer of the tropics with the heat and moisture of a forcing house. In the Punjab there are extremes of cold and heat. For most of the years its plains are brown and arid, scorched in summer with fiery winds like the blast of a furnace; in winter they are clothed in a mantle of green crops, while the climate is that of a Riviera winter. In central India there are well-defined seasons of heat and cold with no great extremes. Heat and moisture predominate in Bengal and make it one of the dampest and greenest countries of

the earth. Still greater contrasts could be found if the Himalayan region and the deserts of Sind were included in the account. The Himalaya themselves exhibit every gradation of cold and heat, of luxuriance and sterility, of loveliness and desolation. But enough has been said to make it clear that India is a continent, not a country, and a continent of infinite variety.

What are the limits or boundaries of India ? We must distinguish between the natural limits of India, as determined by its mountains and rivers, and its political boundaries. By the latter we mean the limits of the British Indian Empire, as indicated by the red boundary line drawn round the Indian continent on the map of Asia. The political boundary obviously includes a good deal of country that is not Indian. On the extreme east the province of Burma is geographically part of China, and is parted from the Indian continent by a mass of mountains. On the extreme west the political boundary makes a wide bend beyond the Indus and takes in large tracts of mountainous country on the borders of Persia, Afghanistan and China. On the north the Himalaya seem at first sight to provide a clear frontier line. They look on a map like a continuous rampart : they suggest that India might stop where they rise from the plains. But a large scale map

on examination shows that the Himalaya are not a single range of mountains but many ranges, and that the political boundary is laid far back in their recesses. The red line includes from east to west an average breadth of one hundred miles of the mountainous region of the Himalaya. It should also be noted that the Himalayan tract within the red boundary is shown in different colours. The greater part is coloured red. This means British territory. In the north-west angle a large area is coloured yellow. This is the "protected" native state of Kashmir, whose ruler is under the suzerainty of, and owes allegiance to, the British Crown. In the central section a large area is coloured green. This is the native state of Nepal. It is not a "protected" state like Kashmir, and in all internal affairs enjoys complete independence. But it is bound by treaty to the British alliance, and in foreign policy it is within the British sphere of influence.

Thus the political boundaries of India have been laid out on a generous scale. It is as if the owner of a large estate in an unsettled country had taken in on every side as much rough land as he thought was necessary for his privacy, and for keeping marauders off his fields and homestead. It is exactly what has happened in the building up of the British Indian empire. The wide-flung political boundary of

India marks the steps that have been taken to seize advantageous points or to put down troublesome neighbours. The acquisition of territory in Burma for instance was due to the invasion of the British province of Assam by the Burmese kings. Later acquisitions in Burma were in like manner provoked by the policy of the Burmese and by fear of French intrusion from the side of Tonquin. The same process on a still larger scale has created the present political frontier on the north-west side of India beyond the Indus. On this side India has always been exposed to raids and invasions. There are four or five routes through Afghanistan and the neighbouring mountainous country which from the earliest ages have been followed by invading hosts. For centuries an independent Afghanistan meant trouble to India. An adventurous chief who established himself at Kabul or at Ghazni had control of the passes into India, and could command the services of all the freebooters of Asia when he set out to invade it. The most powerful sovereigns of India have found it essential to hold the northern approaches among the mountains west of the Indus. When they lost these they lost the Indus valley and the western Punjab. The British rulers of India have followed the same law of self-preservation. From the Indus they have advanced their political

boundary into the mountains beyond it. A part of these non-Indian lands is now included in British India. But a larger part is controlled by a system of protectorates, where British influence prevails but where the actual government is left to the tribes themselves. A still larger portion is left to the kingdom of Afghanistan, under an independent ruler seated at Kabul. But though independent, he receives a subsidy from the British Indian Government; he is bound to act in alliance with it, and in external policy his territories are recognised as within the sphere of British influence.

The political boundaries of the British Indian Empire thus illustrate on a very large scale the practice of "throwing out a line of frontier round a wide tract of unsettled country in order to exclude rivals." They include in consequence a great extent of country that is geographically speaking not Indian.

The natural boundaries of India consist of sea and land. The sea boundary on the east and west calls for no description. But the land boundary on the northern face is intricate. The Himalaya, as has been already said, are not a well-defined mountain chain running across the country from sea to sea. They are a part of a great mountain region where range follows range, and where the water

parting lies behind the central range of snows. The Himalayan mountains, which tower above the plains of India in a continuous line of snowy peaks, are but the wrinkled southern edge of the great Tibetan plateau. Their highest range is at a distance of eighty to a hundred miles from the plains. Between it and the plains are minor ridges intersected by streams and valleys. Behind the snow-line s a deep depression or trough, in which west and east fed by glacial streams run rivers which eventually terminate in India. Westward runs the Indus, and eastward a river which in India becomes the Brahmaputra. Both rivers take their rise near the glacial lake of Mánasarowar and the peak of Kailas, names among the most sacred of Hindu mythology. The Indus bursts into India at Attock, near the military station of Peshawar, after a journey of seven hundred miles in its rocky cradle in the mountains. The Brahmaputra enters Assam after a still longer course. The trough which thus conveys them to India in opposite directions is one of the most remarkable in the world. It has not been explored throughout its entire length. Portions only of its mighty gorges have been seen by human eyes. To the north of the trough is the table-land of Tibet, the most elevated region of the kind in the world. Its average elevation is from fifteen thousand

to eighteen thousand feet above the sea—a height surpassing that of the loftiest mountains of Europe. Its width is from three hundred to four hundred miles. Geologists have shown that the Himalaya and the Tibetan plateau are essentially one formation, and are due to the same cause. In comparatively recent times as geological periods go this portion of the earth's surface was forced up by contraction of the crust. The Indus-Brahmaputra trough is a mere crack or scratch in the surface of this vast elevated region.

The Himalaya are contained between the Indus where it bends and enters India on the west, and the Brahmaputra where it makes a similar bend and enters India on the east. In their length of fifteen hundred miles there are three or four points where a passage into Tibet or China is possible. Through these high passes races of Mongolian origin have filtered into Himalayan valleys and made their homes there; and during the summer months a certain amount of trade struggles through them. But to an invasion in force the Himalaya, as thus defined, are an impassable obstacle. North and west of the Indus, however, the complete protection afforded by the Himalaya ceases. Their place is taken by other mountain ranges, stretching down to the Persian Gulf. These mountains are often as lofty and imposing

as the Himalaya, but they are not so continuous. They contain open tracts inhabited by hardy tribes, and they are traversed by several routes, which, though difficult, are quite practicable for large armies. They are really highlands belonging to Persia and Central Asia rather than to India. The distinctively Indian races stop at the east bank of the Indus, and geographically that river is the western limit of India. But a river is never a strong political frontier. It is not surprising that from the mountains beyond the Indus all the great invasions of India in times past have proceeded, and that this is still its vulnerable point.

At the eastern end of the Himalaya, where the Brahmaputra bends round and enters India, the feature noticed in the mountains west of the Indus is repeated. Between the Himalaya and the head of the Bay of Bengal the land frontier is formed by a new set of mountain ranges running from north to south. They seem on the map to be an extension of the Himalaya and an equally efficient barrier between India and the outer world. But they are not as protective as they look. There is no doubt that through them in ancient times large bodies of immigrants passed into India from China, and in quite recent times they did not prevent a Burmese invasion and the occupation of an

Indian province by Burmese kings. In the present province of eastern Bengal and Assam the population is largely Mongolian in type, and must originally have been recruited from China. Hitherto the eastern frontier of India proper has given the rulers of India no serious anxiety. But the position might be changed if China should in the future become an efficient military power like Japan. In that case the danger point might possibly be found on the frontier of Burma, our latest extra-Indian acquisition.

This completes all that need be said about the natural boundaries of India. Internally the country falls into three great regions, the Himalayan region, the Indo-Gangetic plain, and the peninsula proper.

The Himalaya have already been described in our survey of the external bounds of India. But the fact cannot be too firmly grasped that these mountains are not only an external boundary, but form within India an extensive alpine region, very much larger and containing a much greater population than Switzerland. The enchanting valley of Kashmir is the most famous and the largest of many similar valleys within the Himalaya. The Himalaya give to India her principal rivers, and through their influence on the rainfall they affect all the conditions of life in the plains above which they rise. They are the source not

only of the Brahmaputra and the Indus and their tributaries, but also of the equally great river system of the Ganges.

The Indo-Gangetic plain lies between the footwall of the Himalaya and the peninsula proper. The latter term needs explanation. Relatively to the Asiatic continent the whole of India may be regarded as a peninsula. But the term is more appropriately applied to the southern portion that is washed on either side by the sea. A line drawn horizontally on the map from Calcutta to Karachi cuts off this southern triangle from the extra-peninsular or continental part of India. Peninsular India or the Deccan (literally, the country to the south) is geologically distinct from the Indo-Gangetic plain and the Himalaya. It is the remains of a former continent which stretched continuously to Africa in the space now occupied by the Indian Ocean. The rocks of which it is formed are among the oldest in the world and show no traces of having ever been submerged. In many parts they are overlaid by a sheet of black "trap" rock or basalt, which once flowed over them as molten lava. In the Deccan we are, therefore, in the first days of the world. We see land substantially as it existed before the beginnings of life.

The Indo-Gangetic plain stretches without a break from the Indus on the west to the

delta of the Ganges on the east, a distance of twelve hundred miles. When the world was still in the making and before the elevation of the Himalaya, the space now occupied by this plain was a sea. The southern shore of this sea was what is now peninsular India. With the rise of the Himalaya the sea disappeared, and the rivers draining the Himalaya flowed into the depression, bringing with them the silt which is now the soil of the plain. Tennyson speaks of the streams

> "that swift or slow
> Draw down æonian hills and sow
> The dust of continents to be."

The Indo-Gangetic plain is literally the dust of mountains—the product of river action through æons of time. The process still goes on. The Indus on the west and the Ganges on the east are still building new land and pushing their deltas into the sea. Since Alexander the Great embarked his troops at the mouth of the Indus on his withdrawal from India, the whole coast line of Sind has altered. The surface of the present province of the Punjab is scored with abandoned river-beds. The five great rivers of the Punjab have repeatedly changed their courses and their junctions with the Indus. One large river, which gave life and wealth to the desert wastes of Rajputana and Sind, has ceased to exist. Hindu mythology

ascribed these convulsions, some of which were due to earthquakes, to the domestic dissensions of the gods. At such times the rivers and mountains were lightly flung about. Legend recounts that where the Jumna and Ganges meet at the modern city of Allahabad, they are joined by an invisible third. It is the lost river of Sind, the victim of an Olympian brawl. Modern science offers a more rational if more prosaic explanation of physical changes in the universe.

The Indo-Gangetic plain is in many respects the most important feature of the Indian continent. It contains more than half the total population of India, and four-fifths of its wealth. Geologically a single plain, its physical conditions are very diversified. The western or Indus half, except where its northern fringe skirts the Himalaya and draws moisture from them, is arid and more or less rainless. To the south it tails off in wastes, shown in the map as the "Thar" or Indian desert. At its best the Indus plain is a grey, treeless region. Save in the river valleys or in canal tracts the dull monotony of the formless plain is unbroken. But there is no fault to be found with the soil, and the magic wand of the irrigation engineer is now transforming these waste spaces into green cornfields and prosperous settlements. The northern fringe—if fringe is an adequate

word for a tract varying from one hundred to two hundred miles in breadth—is fertile and habitable. For centuries it has served as the highway for invaders from the north. If we follow the road from Peshawur to Rawalpindi, Lahore, and onwards to Delhi, we are in the footsteps of every empire-builder who has conquered northern India. At Delhi we strike the Jumna river, the most westerly tributary of the Ganges, and we enter the Gangetic plain. The rivers now flow east. The fertile, alluvial plain broadens out. The country as we go east wears a more comely look. It is greener and better wooded; closely settled and carefully tilled. Water is more abundant and nearer to the surface. The air has lost the dryness of the desert, and is softer and damper. We are now in Hindustan—"the place of the Hindus" as the Mohammedan historians called it; the heart of ancient Indian civilisation; the "middle-land" of the later Vedic hymns; the core of the Mughal empire. Every step eastwards brings us nearer to the holy places and famous cities of Hinduism. Muttra, Hardwar, Ajudhia, Benares, Patna, Gya—to mention a few only—are to the Hindu what Mecca or Baghdad is to the Musalman, Jerusalem or Rome to the Christian. Three or four hundred miles below Benares we reach the eastern limit of Hindustan. Imper-

ceptibly it merges into Bengal. In Hindustan the average rainfall averages thirty to forty inches a year, increasing towards the east. In Bengal a rainfall of fifty to sixty inches is common, and in eastern Bengal this is exceeded. The air is now languorous and vapour-laden, the vegetation luxuriant and tropical. The firm, grey plain of wheat and millets and sugar-cane dotted with clumps of park-like trees gives place to rice swamps and bamboos, palm and plantain. The Ganges after its junction with the Brahmaputra becomes a sea. The whole country is now a network of creeks and streams. The boat takes the place of the bullock-cart, the waterways are the roads. In this torrid, steamy, prolific region life is easy, wants are few. It is the home of a vast and ever-increasing population.

Assam, to the north of Bengal, resembles the latter in its heavy rainfall, its verdure, and luxuriant vegetation. It is also a land of hills, and where it abuts on the Himalaya ranges it shelters some of the most primitive and savage races of India. But its title to honour is the magnificent waterway of the Brahmaputra. The fertile and picturesque valley through which this river flows is the seat of the prosperous tea industry. A tangle of rough hills separates Assam from Burma. So intricate and numerous are the ranges that

no highway, much less a railway, has yet been made to connect the two provinces. Access to Burma from India is, therefore, by the sea. The difficult land frontier of Burma accounts for the complete contrast which that country presents to India proper in race, civilisation and religion. The term "Indo-China" best describes it. Northern Burma is a mountainous forest-clad region with noble streams and valleys of great beauty. The Irrawaddy far down its course to the flats of lower Burma preserves the charm of a mountain-bred river, and is the tourist's joy. Its delta is a vast rice plain as fertile as that of the Nile.

We may now retrace our steps to Hindustan. To the south of the Ganges the country loses its flat and alluvial character, and rises in a series of rough tablelands towards peninsular India. In many parts it is a mere mass of valleys and stony hills. In the fertile plains between the Ganges and the Himalaya man and his works are never out of sight. But these rough uplands to the south are thinly inhabited. They constitute a strong country, difficult to invade or hold; and because of this they have befriended races and tribes which had no chance in the open plains against organised force. In the east the Chota Nagpur plateau shelters the Santals and other primitive tribes who to this day use the bow and arrow. To the west extend

the two large central regions known as central India and Rajputana, which for the most part are parcelled out among native states. In central India the plateau country is at its best. As it trends southwards to the Vindhya hills it broadens out into rolling downs of great fertility. Here in old days was the famous kingdom of Malwa, long a centre of ancient Hindu civilisation. The splendour of its capital Ujjain was the favourite theme of Hindu poets. West of central India the hills and deserts of Rajputana stretch for leagues till they merge in the great Indian desert. Rajputana is the land of the Rajput clans, into which they were driven from the fertile plains of Hindustan by the Muhammadan armies. Here amid the hills and sandy wastes they founded new homes, and were never completely subjugated. In the extreme west, where the states of Jodhpur, Bikanir and Jaisalmir lie, the soil, says a local proverb, grows more spears than ears of corn. "One horn of the cow," says another proverb, alluding to the precariousness of the rainfall, "lies within the rainy zone and the other without."

The Vindhya hills are the northern boundary of peninsular India or the Deccan. A confused mass of forest-clad hills, they bar the approaches to the central tablelands of the peninsula. In former times when the wood-

lands were denser and the country roadless, a military expedition into southern India was a serious matter. So the Muhammadan conquerors of Hindustan found it, and it is easy to understand why the south had a separate history, separate dynasties and kingdoms, and was included for short and transitory periods only in the northern empire.

The topography of the Deccan is altogether different from that of northern India. The vast plain that stretches from the Indus to Calcutta invited easy conquest and empire-building ; its fertile alluvial soil and unfailing rivers make it a hive of industry and the home of a dense population. The Deccan, as a whole, is a broken and rocky country. It lent itself to the establishment of separate states, and gave protection to the weak against the strong. Accordingly its history is extremely confusing. It is a record of many contemporaneous dynasties, engaged in endless wars of aggression or defence.

The Deccan, or India south of the Vindhyas, may be described as a tableland of very irregular and broken surface, with a general slope from west to east. On either side it is buttressed by the hills known respectively as the western and eastern Ghats. Ghat literally means a flight of steps or landing stairs. The western Ghats are a formidable

barrier between the strip of lowlands fringing the coast and the interior tableland. They extend in an unbroken line the whole length of the coast, and attain an average height of four thousand feet. Their influence on the climate of the peninsula is great, as they intercept and break the monsoon-clouds from the Indian ocean. Their western face and the low country at their base are drenched with torrential rain during the monsoon, while the plains behind are comparatively rainless and arid. Here is the home of the formidable Mahratta race, who found in the wild and difficult country of the Ghats a perfect base of operations against the Muhammadan armies. A glance at the map will show that the rivers of the Deccan take their rise in the western Ghats and following the general slope of the country flow in an easterly direction, and discharge themselves into the bay of Bengal. The eastern Ghats are an ill-defined range of no great height, and to the south they recede from the coast, leaving room for wide stretches of fertile lowlands. The ancient civilisation of southern India was centred in the east and south on the great rivers and the lowlands, and has left memorials of its greatness in many ruined capitals. The deltas of the Godaveri the Kishna and the Cauveri rivers are vast expanses of rice fields, and their prosperity is

secured by canal irrigation systems rivalling that of the delta of lower Egypt. In the extreme south the Malabar and Tanjore districts are second to none in India in tropical luxuriance and fertility.

If we look at a map showing the present political distribution of India south of the Vindhyas, two large tracts coloured yellow will be seen lying between the provinces of Bombay and Madras. These two tracts are respectively the native states of Hyderabad and Mysore. In the extreme south there is a third but smaller yellow tract containing the states of Travancore and Cochin. These three tracts are instructive. The Dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad, to use the official designation, mark the southern limits of the Mughal empire. Nizam meant viceroy, and the present ruler of Hyderabad is the lineal descendant of a Muhammadan noble who governed the Deccan on behalf of the Delhi emperor. Mysore, Travancore and Cochin are ancient Hindu states. Their existence tells us that the country south of the Kishna river, which bounds the Nizam's dominions on the south, is to this day the most Hindu portion of India. It has never, save for a short period during the anarchy of the eighteenth century, been under Muhammadan rule. The great mass of the population are of the aboriginal Dravidian race, and speak

Dravidian languages. There was no Aryan conquest, and though there was Aryan immigration there was no general diffusion of Aryan blood. The Brahmans of southern India, who represent Aryan culture and Aryan traditions, are a race apart.

We have completed our survey of the Indian continent. It has shown us the extent and diversity of the countries included in the term India, and the numerous races which inhabit it. In the great alluvial plains of the north we found that the aboriginal races have been overborne by the Aryan and the Muhammadan invader. To the east and south these influences thin out as we leave the plains for the broken country of central India and the Deccan. In the extreme south we find that the aboriginal race and their languages still predominate. We end our journey in the oldest corner of the continent.

A word or two may be said about the present political divisions of India. The primary division is into British India and Native States. Of the Native States some account will be given in a later section. With few and unimportant exceptions they occupy the interior of the continent and have no seaboard. We see in this the special feature of the British settlement in India. It came by way of the sea and was made effective by a nation deriving its strength from its mastery

of the ocean. British India is distributed into eight major and two minor provinces. The two latter—Beluchistan and the North-Western Frontier Province—are really military outworks on the further side of the Indus river. Of the eight major provinces the three oldest are Madras, Bombay and Bengal. The others have been gradually formed by subdivision or through later acquisitions. With the exception of Burma no province represents a natural unit: that is to say, they do not stand for differences of race or language, or geographical distinctions. They are purely administrative divisions of territory. An Indian province is not what we mean by a nation, though it tends to create a provincial spirit, which is not far removed from the beginning of a national life.

CHAPTER II

ITS HISTORY

THE history of India falls into three main divisions; the Hindu period, the Muhammadan period, and the period of the establishment of European dominion.

These are rough divisions, as the periods overlap and it is not possible to define them sharply or to assign dates to their beginning or ending. But they serve as a framework and they broadly indicate the current of the story of India.

Each period marks the invasion of India by fresh races from colder climes, and the transfer of the country in whole or in part to new masters. Some persons may see in this the tragedy of India. But a more hopeful and a better view is to regard the past as the passage to and preparation for a higher civilisation and a better ordered political system than would have otherwise been attainable.

As to dates the Hindu period begins in a remote and unchronicled antiquity. It opens

with the migrations of the Aryans from the plains of Persia and central Asia into northern India, and their conquest of the aboriginal races. These events occupied a large space of time from 2000 B.C. onwards, but the first date which scholars have been able to fix approximately for any political event is 600 B.C. The Muhammadan period may be taken to run from about A.D. 1000, when Moslem inroads began on a large scale, to about the middle of the eighteenth century, when Delhi slipped from the feeble hands of the last of the Mughal emperors. For the third period the battle of Plassey, June 23, 1757, is a convenient date. That battle, in which Clive with nine hundred Europeans and two thousand sepoys routed the army of the Nawab of Bengal, is usually regarded as the beginning of British supremacy in India.

The Hindu Period.—When we say that the Hindu period of Indian history opens with the settlement of Aryan tribes on the Indus and its branches, we do not mean that India had no earlier past. On the contrary it was inhabited by other races, and the history of the Aryans in India is that of the subjugation of these races. Something will be said about these races in a later section. Here it is sufficient to say that there is no record of the pre-Aryan days of India, and that our knowledge of India begins with the Vedic

hymns. From these hymns, of which the earliest are in the collection named the Rig Veda, we can gather a good deal of information about the people who used them, and their social condition. They had already advanced a long way from the primitive state. They were in the agricultural stage, rejoicing in plough-lands, horses, cattle and pastures. The family was the unit of society, and the authority of the father supreme within it. "There were no temples, and no idols; each patriarch of a family lighted the sacrificial fire on his own hearth, and offered milk and rice offerings or animals, or libations of the *soma* juice to the fire, and invoked the 'bright' gods for blessings and health and wealth for himself and his children. Chiefs of tribes were kings, and had professional priests to perform sacrifices and utter hymns for them; but there was no priestly caste and no royal caste. The people were free, enjoying the freedom which belongs to vigorous pastoral and agricultural tribes." The late Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, from whose history of *Civilisation in Ancient India* this passage is taken, probably idealised the life of the early Aryan settlers in India. But we shall not be far wrong if we picture these tribal communities as not unlike the Celtic and Teutonic tribes from whom the nations of western Europe are descended.

As the tribes spread eastward through and beyond the "land of the five rivers," they came in contact with the aboriginal races, and from this point the story of India begins. Essentially it is the story of the gradual penetration of the Aryan tribes into countries already occupied by other races, and of their intermixture with these races in varying degrees. As will be seen later on, the caste and religious system of India is the result of this imperfect fusion. It seems probable that the Aryan settlements in the Punjab were made with small intermixture of race, as there is little aboriginal blood discernible in that province to-day. The Sutlej river for some time must have been their frontier. Beyond it the land was possessed by "fiends" or "black-skins," as they are termed in the hymns. With libations poured over the sacrificial fire the gods are asked to give victory over these to the "noble" or "Aryan" men (the word has the double meaning). The "colour" distinction thus came on the stage very early. As the original meaning of the Sanskrit word "caste" is "colour," the origin of this famous institution is clear.

The advance of the Aryan tribes from the Punjab to the Gangetic plain and their conquest of the country between the Himalaya and the Vindhya mountains must have

occupied some centuries. The fact is vaguely indicated in the changed geography of the later Vedas, which now refer to the country between the Ganges and the Jumna; and it also appears in the recognition given to the caste system in these later books. But we are left to conjecture the actual stages of the migration. What seems certain is that as the Aryan settlers went east, they took wives from the short dark races whose lands they had seized, and whom they had made serfs and domestic drudges. Some such explanation is required to account for the change in physique, type and language of the population east of the Punjab; and it is implied in the later Vedas, and in the religious books called Brahmanas which were composed at this time. Under priestly guidance the men of Aryan blood became the "twice-born" classes —the Kshattriya or warrior class, the Brahman or priest, the Vaisya or husbandman; while a fourth class, the Sudra, was constituted for the aborigines and half-bloods. The Sudra had no share in the sacrificial worship which the Brahmans conducted. His duty was defined to be to serve meekly the other classes.

Society while remaining tribal in the lands between the Ganges and the Jumna became also territorial. The clansmen held their lands in family groups, and the head of the

clan became also its territorial chief or *raja*, with a right to receive tithe of the produce of the land. Outside the cultivating group or brotherhood, men of Sudra caste performed various offices for the community, and had their allotted share of the grain heap. In essentials this is the village system to-day in northern India. There were wars among the tribes and grouping of tribes under leaders. One great war was celebrated in later ages in a vast poem known as the Mahabharata. It is full of fabulous incidents and heavenly machinery. The war and the poem are respectively the Indian equivalents of the Trojan war and the Iliad. There is another vast epic, the Ramayana, or the adventures of Prince Rama, of about the same period. To this day these ancient poems, reset in modern vernaculars, delight millions of Indian peasants

In peninsular India to the south of the Vindhya mountains the spread of Aryan civilisation was slow The races there, which are known under the general term Dravidian, were powerful and civilised communities. Here it was less a case of conquest than of gradual diffusion of Aryan leaders and Aryan social and religious ideas Some Aryan states were founded, and Brahmanical doctrines and the Brahman priesthood became supreme. But to this day the mass of the people in

southern India show little trace of Aryan blood and speak non-Aryan languages.

About 1000 B.C. the tribal and territorial chief-ships in the Gangetic plain began to give place to larger states. How the change came about we do not know, but probably the feuds of the clans gave openings to ambitious and successful chiefs to found kingdoms. The tribal system with its territorial rajas was not destroyed, but it was constantly overborne. When Alexander the Great invaded India in 326 B.C. he found independent tribes in parts of the country and powerful kingdoms elsewhere. The Indian monarch Porus, whom he defeated at the passage of the Jhelum, had a large array of horse, foot, chariots and war-elephants. There were reports of a still larger kingdom called Magadha in the Gangetic plain. Its capital was on the site of the present city of Patna. Twenty-five years later this kingdom grew into an Indian empire, which stretched from sea to sea, and extended beyond the Afghan mountains to the confines of Persia. The founder was Chandragupta Mauriya, and the empire he founded lasted nearly one hundred and fifty years. At its zenith it was the paramount power throughout northern India and in the greater part of southern India. In magnitude it must have been as extensive as the present Indian dominions of the Crown.

The Mauriyan empire (320-180 B.C.) is interesting for two reasons. It produced the famous emperor-monk Asoka, and it was the forerunner and type of similar attempts to found a universal empire in India. Asoka is known to us through his edicts on pillars and rocks, enjoining on his subjects the observance of the moral law taught by Gautama Buddha two hundred and fifty years before Through Asoka's efforts Buddhism became the official religion of India for several centuries, and was carried to China and Ceylon. Asoka is one of the great figures in Indian history. In his piety and in his zeal he is the Indian Alfred the Great.

The sudden appearance of a great military empire in India in the third century B.C. excites surprise. We are tempted to ask whence came the idea and the ground plan It is a reasonable conjecture that the idea and the plan were borrowed from Persia. We have a minute description of Chandragupta's court and administration from the Greek ambassador, Megasthenes, who resided there for a time. His account of the barbaric splendour of the court, of the monarch's state and female guards when he went abroad, of his huge standing army, of the division of the empire into provinces, of the inspectors or newsagents who reported on the action of the provincial governors to the king—all these

are features of the Persian monarchy. The Persian empire, before its overthrow by Alexander, was the great fact in the East. It dominated all men's minds by its magnitude. Its elaborate and highly centralised system was the last word of the East on the art of government. It rested on three principles: the kingly power with military force at its command; a host of trained civil officials; and strict control from the centre. "It erred perhaps," says a recent writer, "on the side of centralisation; but then the East does not understand, and never has understood, anything but centralisation in government." And he makes a remark which is as applicable to Indian as to Persian empires, that "it was at the centre of the empire, in the reigning family itself, that the decay set in which corrupted the whole." This dazzling Persian model was the envy and aim of every successful military adventurer. It was familiar to India, as a large part of the north-west of India had before Alexander's conquests been annexed by the Persian kings. It is thus not surprising that a great military empire should have been formed in India in the years 300-200 B.C. in close imitation of the Persian system.

When the Mauriyan empire fell there was confusion for several centuries. Central Asia found the passes into India open and made use

of the opportunity. Tribes of Scythians passed down the Indus valley and into the western Punjab, and founded principalities which lasted many years. A powerful Turkish dynasty, known as the Kushan Kings, established themselves in Afghanistan during the first three centuries of our era, and conquered northern India as far east as Benares. The Turkish race has always shown a readiness to accept the culture and religions of more civilised nations, and this trait is very marked in these Kushan kings. From India they accepted Buddhism, but they added elements of Brahmanism, and placed Buddha among the great gods of Hindu mythology. On their coins they used the Greek alphabet to express Indian royal titles, and Greek influence is manifest in the remarkable series of sculptures which they left behind them in the country about Peshawar. The Gandhara sculptures, as they are called, are concerned with the adoration of Buddha, and with traditional incidents in his life and death; and these purely Indian ideas are expressed under unmistakably Greek forms. Sculptures of this type have been found in the Gangetic plain, and are one of many proofs of the extent to which India from earliest times has been under foreign influences.

The fourth and fifth centuries of our era are justly regarded as the golden age of Hinduism.

The Aryan clans in the Gangetic plain were again brought together under a strong and vigorous monarchy, and the political unity of India was again nearly attained. The Gupta kings, as they were called from their tribal name, revived the glories of the ancient kingdom of Magadha, and for one hundred and fifty years held undisputed sway in upper India and beyond. We have a pleasing picture of India in these days from the journal of a pious Buddhist pilgrim from China. He found a peaceful and contented population under a lenient and paternal government. He was impressed by the mildness of the criminal law, by the freedom of travel permitted to all, and by the numerous signs of wealth and prosperity. This picture is confirmed by other evidence. There was progress not only in material wealth, but in architecture and letters. In religion Brahmanism, that is to say the sacrificial worship of Siva Vishnu and other Hindu deities, the doctrine of transmigration of souls, the social pre-eminence and sanctity of Brahmans, gained ground on and finally supplanted Buddhism. Buddhism had become formal and ceremonial without becoming popular. It had lost its first force as a way of life, as a solution of the riddle of existence. It was trivial and tedious, exalting the monastic habit and visiting with severe penalties the taking of animal, even

insect, life. It was no match for the new Brahmanism, which, departing from the "bright" nature deities and the simple worship of the Vedic hymns, laid itself out to pander to the terrors and the appetite for the marvellous of primitive man. It peopled the universe with fierce and terrible gods and goddesses, and invented monstrous and blood-curdling legends about its creation and its future. It borrowed from the aboriginal races their darkest myths, their grossest superstitions, their most dreaded and degraded deities; and it compounded these into the most fantastic and bewildering system of theology and metaphysics that the world has ever known. This process went on long after the Gupta age, but its beginnings date from it.

Even in the golden age of the Guptas India could not shake off her fate. Political unity was attained only to vanish. This time the blow was delivered by a new enemy. Early in the fifth century a terrible race, the Huns, under pressure of war or famine, moved eastwards and westwards from the central table-land of Asia. One horde burst like a tempest on Europe, producing Attila, the "scourge of God." The other overwhelmed India. The Gupta empire went down in the storm about A.D. 480. After that event prolonged darkness falls upon India. It

lifts for a few years in the seventh century. By that time the Huns had been absorbed or broken into petty kingships, and we have accounts of the rise of another Hindu empire in northern India with Kananj (now a desolate site not far from Cawnpur) as its capital. But it speedily broke up, and with it went the last constructive effort of Hinduism in upper India. Henceforth neither in upper nor in southern India was there any successful attempt to reach political unity or to found permanent nation-states. In fact, as time went on, the forces making for disintegration and anarchy multiplied and increased in strength.

One of the signs of this is the rise of Rajput kingdoms and chiefships. The internal feuds and migrations of the great Rajput clans make up the confused and fragmentary history of the centuries between the fall of the Gupta empire and the coming of the Muhammadans. We find them established in political power not only in what is now central India and Rajputana but also throughout the Punjab and the Gangetic plain. We do not exactly know how the Rajput clan grew out of the Aryan family. When the Rajputs first appear in history, they are powerful tribal groups, occupying more or less extensive tracts of country, and claiming descent from the sun or moon or from some mythical ancestor of princely rank. They

were constantly engaged in internal feuds, and in efforts to increase their tribal lands at the expense of their neighbours. The disappearance of the Gupta empire and the confusion caused by the irruption of the Huns gave an opportunity to the most powerful clans to form independent kingdoms. We find accordingly in the tenth century Rajput houses ruling not only in Rajputana where they exist to-day, but in all the great cities of northern and western India. The Rajputs had, as they still have, the virtues and the weaknesses of clansmen. They were brave and chivalrous; devoted to their clan and chief. But beyond their chief their loyalty did not go. The chiefs might temporarily combine against an external enemy; but their family pride and jealous temper made permanent union impossible. These defects were fatal to the Hindu cause when the wave of Moslem invasion broke over the country.

The Muhammadan Period.—It would be idle to speculate as to what the future of India would have been, had there been no Moslem conquest. When the nomad races of central Asia embraced the creed of Islam, the invasion and subjugation of India became a certainty. The Muhammadan religion gave to these wild races precisely the stimulus, the ardour and the bond of unity that the enterprise required. They became a brotherhood of believers, the

elect of God, whose mission it was to win the lands and the goods of the heathen by the sword, and to establish Islam throughout the world. A spirit of adventure and religious zeal made them irresistible against the suspicious and divided Indian races. What they lacked in numbers was more than made up in solidarity of purpose and fiery zeal. Moreover India was a rich prey. Its wealth to the hungry nomads of the steppes seemed fabulous. It attracted to the ranks of the invaders every bold and needy soldier of fortune in Asia. The plunder of India was a magnet that never ceased to attract so long as the passes leading down to the plains could be forced. No sooner had one set of invaders established themselves in the rich centres of India than they were called on to defend their new possessions against fresh hordes from the north. For five hundred years, reckoning from A.D. 1000, successive hosts of fierce and greedy Turks, Afghans, and Mongols trod upon one another's heels and fought for mastery in India. At the end of that time, Babar the Turk founded in 1526 the Mughal empire; thenceforward for two hundred years the passes into India were closed and in the keeping of his capable successors.

The subjugation of India by Moslem invaders was thus a gradual and protracted affair. The first comers were Arabs, who founded

dynasties in Sind and Multan as early as 800. But their conquests did not extend and had merely a local effect. About 1000 the terror came. By that time the Tartar races had been brought into the fold of Islam, and the Turks, the most capable of these races, had started on the career which in the west ended in their establishment at Constantinople. A Turkish chieftain founded a small kingdom at Ghazni in the heart of the Afghan hills. In 997 his son Mahmud descended upon India. His title "the Idol-breaker" describes the man. Year by year he swept over the plains of India, capturing cities and castles, throwing down idols and temples, slaughtering the heathen and proclaiming the faith of Muhammad. Each year he returned with vast spoils to Ghazni, which he enriched until it became the wonder of the East. The Punjab he annexed, and under his descendants it became a Muhammadan kingdom. In course of time the kingdom of Ghazni was swallowed up by the neighbouring and kindred state of Ghor, which produced in Muhammad Ghori a zealot of the same type and temper as Mahmud the "Idol-breaker." Like Mahmud he had no wish to establish himself in India, and preferred his mountain home. But for thirty years (1175-1206) he raided India as the land of the infidel, carrying his banners as far as Bengal and overwhelming the Rajput chivalry in

battle. Returning from one of these raids he was slain on the banks of the Indus. His Indian possessions passed into the hands of his ablest general, a slave who, in Turkish fashion, had been raised to supreme command. India now saw a Muhammadan king established at Delhi. The dynasty thus founded was known as the Slave Kings.

We may therefore take 1206 as the date of the permanent establishment of the Muhammadan predominance in India. At first this predominance was confined to northern India, with Delhi as the centre. The Slave Kings were merely successful conquerors, and when they ceased to be strong and capable they made way for others. Turks, Afghans and Mongols jostled each other for lands, retainers and power. There were constant rebellions and murders, and the throne of Delhi repeatedly changed hands by force or fraud. Five dynasties and thirty-four kings followed each other in the course of three hundred years. Other adventurers carved out kingdoms for themselves both in northern India and south of the Narbada. The Rajput clans withdrew from the central plain of Hindustan to the hills and the desert, where they stubbornly kept the Muhammadans at bay. In the Muhammadan kingdoms Hinduism, though prostrate, was still alive and conscious. The Hindus

vastly predominated in numbers, in intellect, and in the arts of peace, and the Muhammadans were as a camp of rude armed men, dependent upon the inhabitants of the country for the requirements of civil life. The conquerors and the conquered never completely fused, but they came in time to know each other better, and the former found the latter too useful to think of exterminating them, if that had been possible. Converts continued to be added to the faith, but ordinarily the inducements were pacific. The wives of the conquerors were often of Indian blood, and the Indian Musulman was no longer pure Turk or Afghan. Save for creed he was often of the soil. The spell of India had begun to work. By the end of the sixteenth century the Delhi kingdom was distracted and effete, and the other Moslem kingdoms were not in much better case. Once more was India ripe for the spoiler's hand. The spoiler appeared in Babar, the founder of the Mughal empire.

Babar, though called the "Mughal" or "Mongol," was really a Turk. He belonged to the great house of Timur. After many adventures, which he recounts in his memoirs, he possessed himself of the kingdom of Kabul. From that spring-board in 1526 he descended upon India. Two battles—one with the Muhammadan rulers of Delhi and another against the combined forces of the Rajput

clans—won him the whole of northern India. But for him India had no charms, save its wealth. "Hindustan," he says in his memoirs, "is a country that has few pleasures to recommend it. The country and towns are extremely ugly. The people are not handsome. The chief excellency of Hindustan is that it is a big country with plenty of gold and silver." He was busy collecting gold and silver and remitting it to his Kabul home when he died in his garden-palace at Agra in 1530.

The Mughal empire that Babar founded was of the ordinary type of Asiatic despotisms. It was irresponsible personal government. For India it meant the substitution of a new set of conquerors for those already in occupation. But the new comers brought with them the vigour of the north—they came from the plains of the Oxus beyond the Kabul hills—and they drew an unlimited supply of recruits from the finest fighting races of Asia. In physical strength and hardihood they were like the Norsemen and Normans of Europe. Babar swam every river that he crossed on his road to Delhi. The hardest march through the winter snows of Kabul left him vivacious and untired. Notwithstanding the enervating climate of India and the luxury and dissipation of the Mughal court his successors to the sixth generation

were all men of masculine fibre and vigorous intelligence. They were no barbarians, though the Tartar strain was seen in their anger and their punishments. They were read in the literature of Persia, and their fine taste is seen in the splendid buildings of Agra and Delhi. With the one exception of the emperor Aurangzeb they were not bigots. The creed of Islam sat lightly on them. The greatest of them, the emperor Akbar, was greatly drawn to Hindu mysticism, and tried to found a common religion for men of every race and creed, with himself as high priest. The others, Aurangzeb excepted, were content to leave the infidel to his idols, so long as he paid his taxes and gave no trouble. The empire rested on a truce between the religion of the conquering minority and that of the conquered majority. The policy of toleration was devised by the emperor Akbar, who sealed it by marrying a Rajput princess and by admitting the Rajput chiefs to high office. His successors, till Aurangzeb, who were half-Rajputs by blood, had the good sense to maintain it. Aurangzeb, whose mother was a Persian lady, was a reversion to the strictest and most intolerant form of Islam. He was as strong and capable as any of his race, but in him their great qualities were misdirected. He spent himself and his empire in vain efforts to stamp

out Hinduism. He alienated the Rajputs who had now become the chief military prop of the throne, and he kindled in the Mahratta peasantry of southern India a racial hatred that gathered them for a time almost into a nation. There is no greater tragedy in Indian history than the exhaustion and swift fall of the empire which his misguided policy brought about.

From the invasion of Babar to the death of Aurangzeb (1707) was a period of one hundred and eighty years. During this time the empire remained, as it began, a rule of foreigners. Though Rajputs were taken into the military service of the state and Hindu scribes and financiers employed in civil offices, the administration was essentially foreign and Muhammadan. The country was parcelled out into military commands, and the commanders imported great numbers of men from beyond the mountains. In this way Muhammadan supremacy was established, the Muhammadan population grew, and to this day the effects are seen in the distribution of the Indian population into two great camps, as it were, divided by religion, by traditions of government, and to a large extent by nationality.

The fall of the empire was brought about, as has been said, by the rise of the Mahrattas. The Mahrattas were a rough and turbulent Hindu folk, inhabiting the difficult and broken

country of the western Ghats and the Deccan table-land. It was Aurangzeb's ambition to conquer their overlords, the Muhammadan kings of the Deccan. In the long warfare that resulted in the destruction of these kingdoms, the Mahrattas found their opportunity. They became freebooting companies under daring captains. They grew in strength, defied the Mughal armies, wasting the country, cutting off supplies and stragglers, and everywhere levying tribute. On Aurangzeb's death the empire fell to pieces, and in the general anarchy the Mahrattas for a few years became the strongest power in India. From pillage their leaders, under the guidance of astute Brahman councillors who became hereditary ministers under the title of Peshwa, now soared to dreams of empire. But they forgot one thing. The fall of the Mughal empire had opened the passes leading into India. A Persian army desolated the Punjab and sacked Delhi, and after the Persian an Afghan host swept down from Kabul and seized the imperial city. Baulked of their prey, unwilling to leave it, yet afraid to strike, the Mahrattas entrenched themselves on the famous plain of Pannipat. With retreat cut off and starvation in sight, they were forced to give battle to the Afghans (1761). In the rout which followed their only real chance of an Indian empire vanished. They

withdrew in hot haste to the Deccan; and when after some years they ventured to return to northern India, a new power had arisen, which was destined to wrest from them the broken dominion of the Mughals.

The British Period.—The beginnings of British rule in India date from 1600, when the East India Company was founded in London. It was a company of merchants for trade with the East Indies. It established trading stations, or "factories" as they were called, at various places on the Indian coasts with the permission of the Mughal government. There it found rivals in the Portuguese, the Dutch, and finally the French. Space will not permit us to trace the successive steps by which the English Company overcame these rivals, and from being a trading association became a political power. But speaking generally the causes were two: the superior sea-power of England in its international struggles with France and other nations; and the misrule and anarchy everywhere existing in India on the collapse of the Mughal empire. To the first cause it was due that the Company's severe struggle with the French in Madras during the first half of the eighteenth century terminated in its favour; the French lost the command of the sea, and with it the routes to India. The second made it necessary for the Company to protect its settlements against

the disorderly native governments which were scrambling for power. To do this it maintained European troops and raised native levies. In 1756 an upstart Nawab of Bengal drove the Company out of Calcutta and brought about the death of one hundred and twenty-three European men and women in the "black hole." The Company retaliated by routing the Nawab on the field of Plassey, and setting up in his place another and more amenable potentate. From this point further advance was easy and inevitable. In 1764 the Company came into collision with the kingdom of Oudh, another fragment of the shattered Mughal empire. The Nawab of Oudh was badly beaten at the battle of Buxar. The battle had important consequences. The fugitive Mughal emperor sought the Company's protection, and in return assigned to it the administration of the great and rich province of Bengal. The Company was now definitely launched on a political career.

From Plassey to the Indian mutiny there was an interval of exactly one hundred years. The first fifty years were the most critical, and saw the greatest changes in the fortunes and position of the Company, and in the political map of India. As the result of incessant wars it became the paramount power in India. In the process it was transformed from a trading into a governing corporation. Its

affairs were constantly before Parliament. In the end it was brought under the indirect control of the Crown; and its responsibilities and powers, and the responsibilities and powers of its servants, were strictly defined by Acts of Parliament. As will be explained in another section, Pitt's Act of 1784 established a system of double government. The Company continued to appoint the Governor-General and his council: but the home government issued orders to him, directed his policy, and could recall him. The ministry of the day became responsible for what was done in India. This immensely strengthened the position of the Governor-General. If his conduct was assailed, the political party in power was practically bound to stand by him. Clive and Warren Hastings might be censured by Parliament without the credit of the ministry being affected. The Marquis of Wellesley, who governed India under the new system, did more high-handed things than Hastings with less excuse: yet his conduct was never seriously challenged.

To return to the course of affairs in India. For many years after Plassey the Company had a hard struggle for existence in the anarchy in which the country was engulfed. Everywhere predatory leaders, military adventurers, and ex-officials of the old Mughal empire were scrambling for kingdoms and plunder,

enlisting large armies of mercenaries, and providing employment for them in annual campaigns. Of these competitors the most formidable were the Mahrattas. It was the Company's policy to play the others against the Mahrattas, and its alliances and wars were mostly undertaken with this object. It became increasingly apparent that either the Mahrattas must be put down, or they would eat up India. The danger increased when Scindia, the most powerful of the Mahratta chiefs, brought in French officers to instruct and command his army. At the end of the century he had a well disciplined force of forty thousand men of all arms in northern India. In southern India another large army, under French instructors, had been formed under Tipu Sultan, the Muhammadan ruler of Mysore. This was the situation in 1798 when the Marquis of Wellesley became Governor-General. England was at death-grips with Napoleon in Europe, and the new Governor-General had full authority to make India safe at all costs. This he effectually did. In the course of five years not only was Tipu extinguished and the Mahrattas humbled by crushing defeats and stripped of much territory, but by a series of treaties the principal native states were now brought under control. They were isolated from each other, they were required to accept for the protec-

tion of their territories "subsidiary" forces raised and controlled by the Company, and their external policy was subjected to restraint. From this time (1805) the Company became the strongest power in India.

The second period was one of reconstruction. British supremacy under the form of a trading Company had successfully asserted itself by the sword. British rule had now to justify itself by showing that it could and would do more for India than any of the native and foreign governments of the past. But in building up civil institutions and establishing law and order within its dominions, the Company had to work with the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other. In 1817 Mahratta ambitions again came to a head. This time a sterner and more effective settlement was made. The rule of the Brahman dynasty at Poona was extinguished, and its territories annexed. The other Mahratta chiefs were placed under much stricter control, and the ancient states of Rajputana which they were systematically exhausting were brought under direct British protection and saved from extinction. In 1845 a trouble which had for years hung over northern India like a thunder cloud, finally burst. The Sikhs of the Punjab were an example of the strongest form of political society that the East knows—a military com-

munity nurtured on a fanatical religion and the blood of martyrs. Originally a reformed sect of Hinduism they had been mercilessly hunted down and nearly exterminated by the bigoted emperor Aurangzeb and after him by the Afghans. Under a real military genius, the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, they overthrew their Muhammadan oppressors, drove the Afghans out of the Punjab, and became a nation in arms. Ranjit Singh during a long reign loyally observed the treaty of alliance which he had entered into with the Company. His death in 1839 unchained the ambitions of the Sikh army. A period of anarchy ensued, and finally its leaders flung it against the British power. Two wars were necessary (in 1845 and 1848), marked by obstinate fighting, before the Sikh army was finally extinguished, and the peasant soldiery returned to the plough. Their reconciliation to British rule is one of the most remarkable incidents of modern Indian history.

The dissolution of the Sikh power seemed to remove the last danger to the internal peace of the continent. Under the vigorous administration of Lord Dalhousie, India to outward appearance was entering on an era of material and social progress. But beneath the surface the forces of reaction were at work. The Indian mutiny was primarily a

military revolt, though it gave expression to the unrest and vague disquietude which the company's rapid advance and the introduction of western principles of government and morality had occasioned in India generally It was a struggle, said LORD LAWRENCE, "between Christianity and civilization on one side and barbarism and heathenism on the other." The native army was spoilt by privileges granted to it, and it had an exaggerated sense of its own power. It was five times as numerous as the British forces then serving in India. It was elated by victorious campaigns: at the same time its caste prejudices had been roused by expeditions across the "black water," as the Hindus termed the sea, and by other military requirements. The introduction of a new rifle taking cartridges reported to be smeared with hogs' grease was the match that lit the fire. The sepoys turned savagely against their English officers, and broke out into murderous mutiny

"The wild fanatic outbreak of 1857," as SIR ALFRED LYALL has termed it, was "reactionary in its causes and revolutionary in its effects. It shook for a moment the empire's foundations, but it cleared the area for reconstruction and improvement." Order had to be deduced from confusion, and the foundations of a new and uniform policy laid. The direct government of India was transferred

in 1858 by Act of Parliament from the Company to the Crown. In the language of the Proclamation addressed by Queen Victoria to the princes and peoples of India, the Crown assumed "the government of the territories in India, hitherto administered in trust for us by the Honourable East India Company." The step was necessary, as a change in this direction was overdue. In a notable defence of the East India Company, JOHN STUART MILL maintained that the change would work folly and mischief, and predicted in his *Autobiography* that it would convert the administration of India "into a thing to be scrambled for by the second and third class of English politicians." But these evils have not come to pass. The rule of the Crown in India has in no respect been inferior, and is in most respects greatly superior to that of the Company. The double-government system was at best a clumsy expedient. The assumption of direct sovereignty by the Crown terminated an ambiguous and misleading division of responsibilities and powers. "It sealed the unity of Indian government and opened a new era." The quotation is from King Edward's Proclamation of 1908, likewise addressed, after an interval of fifty years, to the princes and peoples of India. "The journey," the Proclamation went on to say, "was arduous and the advance may

have sometimes seemed slow; but the incorporation of many diversified communities, and of some three hundred millions of the human race, under British guidance and control, has proceeded steadfastly and without pause. We survey our labours of the past half century with clear gaze and good conscience."

With these stately and noble words this necessarily imperfect sketch of the past of India may fitly end. The Proclamation of 1858 was a pledge of good government to the princes and peoples of India, and set out the principles on which the government would be conducted. In a later section we shall see how the pledge has been fulfilled.

CHAPTER III

THE PEOPLE

EMINENT authorities tell us that the distinctive feature of the modern world is the frank recognition of nationality and all that it involves. They also tell us that the two main features of modern history are the development of nationalities and the growth of individual freedom. Tried by these tests India is essentially not part of the modern world. It is a great continent in which there are no nationalities. The population is an immense mixed multitude in different stages of material and moral growth, exhibiting an extraordinary variety of peoples, creeds and manners. Much of India may still be regarded as the best surviving specimen of the ancient world on a large scale.

Some of the causes of the singular spectacle which the country presents have been indicated in the preceding section. From the earliest ages the Indian continent has been subject to invasions and migrations of great

bodies of foreign races from the north. Some seven centuries ago the Muhammadan supremacy was established in northern India. It overthrew the political structure and institutions of Hinduism and planted Islam as a separate community in the midst of an image-worshipping polytheistic people. Henceforward the two streams of belief—the Moslem with his one God, and the Hindu with his multitude of gods—flowed side by side without intermingling. In every part of the continent two societies faced each other—the Muhammadan with his traditions of conquest and rule; the Hindu, with a vague but deeply rooted sense of belonging to the soil, and of encompassing his conquerors.

But something more than the perpetual influx of new races and the friction of rival religions are needed to explain the absence of nationality and the abundance of separate types. In European countries the different races that have come in have blended and produced a more or less uniform type. Celt, Saxon, Dane, Norseman and Norman in our own country have fused together; only in outlying regions, such as Wales, do we recognise a distinct strain. In India there has been blending up to a certain point: but something at an early stage evidently checked, if it did not altogether stop, the natural process of amalgamation. As we shall explain

in another section, this influence was of a religious and racial kind. Brahmanism stepped in and enforced by religious sanctions the colour distinction between the Aryan settlers and the dusky indigenous races whom they found in India. Occupations were made hereditary, and fenced in by prohibitions against intermarriage. That is to say, the institution of caste was created; and its effect has been to put the population into innumerable separate pens, and to keep the inmates of each pen apart. "Nowhere else in the world," it has been said, "do we find the population of a large continent broken up into an infinite number of mutually exclusive aggregates, the members of which are forbidden by an inexorable social law to marry outside the group to which they themselves belong. . . . All the recognised races of Europe are the result of a process of crossing which has fused a number of different tribal types into a more or less definable national type. In India the process of fusion has long ago been arrested, and the degree of progress which it had made up to the point at which it ceased to operate is expressed in the physical characteristics of the groups which have been left behind. There is consequently no national type, and no nation in the ordinary sense of the term." The traveller in India can test this statement in

two simple ways. If during a long journey he observes the population of the railway stations, he will notice a change of type. The change is very gradual, but in the course of twelve hours quite noticeable. If he makes a stay at a place and should pass different sections of the inhabitants under review, he will notice marked physical differences between individuals of different castes, differences of colour, build, stature, shape of head, features, hair. At one end of the scale is the Brahman, with light complexion and almost European type of face and build; at the other the swarthy squat form of the coolie in the streets.

A great deal of attention has been given in recent years by skilled observers to classifying and grouping the different elements of the Indian population. They have been able to distinguish seven main physical types.

The first is the *Indo-Aryan* type. It is met with chiefly in the Punjab, Rajputana and Kashmir. The true Rajput or Sikh is of this type. It approaches most closely to that ascribed to the traditional Aryan colonists of India. It is that of a tall, slight, loose-limbed man, with a head long in proportion to its breadth, a long and prominent nose, and a skin of light transparent brown. In marked contrast to this is the *Dravidian* type.

The term Dravidian requires an explanation. Originally it meant the group of languages spoken in southern India, and then was employed to describe the races speaking those languages. These races are fundamentally of the same stock, and they are found not only in the south but also in the centre of India. The purest examples of the original stock, before it was modified by the admixture of Aryan and other elements, are found among the primitive and half-civilised tribes dwelling in the low hills and jungles of the Chota Nagpur plateau and the Vindhya hills. They are short dark men, with long black hair tending to curl, and with very broad noses depressed at the root. To the tea-planter they are invaluable, as they are hardy and stand exposure. "Labour," wrote the late Sir Herbert Risley in his most informing and valuable work, *The People of India*, "is the birthright of the pure Dravidian and as a coolie he is in great demand wherever one meets him. Whether hoeing tea in Assam, cutting rice in the swamps of Eastern Bengal, or doing scavenger's work in the streets of Calcutta, he is recognised at a glance by his black skin, his swarthy figure, and the negro-like proportions of his nose." The third type is the *Mongolian*. It is represented by the races peopling the border-land between India and Tibet, and by the Burmese The

type is familiar to us in the Chinese. It is that of a small man with broad head, narrow slant eyes, a dark complexion tinged with yellow, and a flat face.

These are the main stocks which have peopled India. The four other types which have been recognised are admixture of these or of other stocks. They are the *Aryo-Dravidian*, the *Mongolo-Dravidian*, the *Scytho-Dravidian*, and the *Turko-Iranian*.

The *Aryo-Dravidian*, as the term implies, is the result of the intermixture in varying proportions of the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian stocks, the former element predominating in the higher classes, and the latter in the lower. In the Punjab the Indo-Aryan race is found without Dravidian admixture. In the south and centre of the continent the mass of the population is more or less pure Dravidian. But in the country to the east of the Punjab, commonly known as the Gangetic valley, the whole population is an admixture of the two stocks. The Brahman there is not pure Indo-Aryan, but he approximates to that type. The lower the caste, the nearer does its type come to the blackness and the stumpy figure of the Dravidian. The *Mongolo-Dravidian* type, as the name implies, is a blend of the Mongolian and Dravidian races. The population of Bengal and Assam is of this strain. In that part of India there is very

little Aryan blood. The broad head and the dark skin of the average Bengali mark his origin. In pre-historic times Mongolian tribes must have poured into that part of India from the highlands of Tibet and China, and mingled with the aboriginal inhabitants.

The *Scytho-Dravidian* type is represented by the Mahratta race inhabiting the western side of the Deccan. The characteristics of this race point to a blend of the Tartar or Scythian element from the steppes of central Asia with the original Dravidian inhabitants of India. And this is consistent with certain historical facts. Long after the settlement of the Aryans in the Punjab successive swarms of Scythian or Tartar invaders forced the northern passes and passed down the Indus valley. It is supposed that they eventually moved on into the Deccan, and established themselves among the Dravidian inhabitants. If the theory be true, it solves a long unsettled problem as to the origin of the Mahratta race.

The last type to be mentioned is the *Turko-Iranian.* This is not found in India proper but in the border-lands to the west of the Indus which are peopled by Beloch and Afghan tribes. In former days the Afghans were fancifully identified as the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Their

physiognomy is suggestive of the Israelite, and they have some vague traditions of such an origin. But more accurate enquiry has shown that they are an admixture of the Iranian race inhabiting the highlands of Persia and the Turk or Tartar stock. They have the tall stature, the long nose, the fair complexion of the Indo-European stock to which the Iranians belonged; and the broad head of the Turk.

Such are the seven main types into which by careful observations and measurements the Indian population has been graded. It is a useful classification because it interprets history in the light of present facts. It explains the effects of the successive invasions of foreign races which India has experienced. But it is necessarily very rough and is only a general guide to the distribution of the Indian races. In southern India for instance, where the mass of the people are of the indigenous stock, there is a considerable Brahman element which is unquestionably Aryan in type. There was no Aryan conquest of the south, but Aryans migrated there and have kept themselves apart almost as a separate community. There is a great gulf between the fair-skinned southern Indian Brahman and the dusky multitudes of the general population. In the Punjab again, though the prevailing type is unquestionably

Aryan, there are many descendants of Afghan Persian or Mughal adventurers and soldiers of fortune whom the Muhammadan conquerors brought into India in their train. Equally is this the case throughout the greater part of Hindustan or, as it is now called, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. It is not uncommon there to come across groups of families or even clans whose ancestors rode with the Emperor Babar to the taking of Delhi. There is a large tract in that region known as Rohilkand, larger than most English counties, of which the Afghan tribe of Rohillas possessed themselves during the anarchy of the eighteenth century, and where they are still numerous.

The Rajput clans are the purest specimens of the Aryan race in India. But it would be a mistake to suppose that the mass of the population of Rajputana is of this type. The Rajputs are there as rulers and overlords. But they are in a great minority. They own the land, but they do not till it; for a Rajput thinks it a disgrace to plough or sow, or do any other manual work. The cultivating and trading classes are of Dravidian and mixed Dravidian types. And still lower down in the social scale, in the recesses of the hills and jungles, the pure Dravidian is found in the person of the Bheel. The Bheel has been drawn to the life by Sir Alfred Lyall

in his *Asiatic Studies*. Sir Alfred Lyall has thus described a scene in the hill tracts of Rajputana. "The tract is mainly peopled by the aboriginal tribe of Bheels and the head man of a Bheel village is being examined touching a recent foray. A very black little man, with a wisp of cloth around his ragged loins, stands forth, bow and quiver in hand, swears by the dog, and speaks out sturdily: 'Here is the herd we lifted; we render back all but three cows, of which two we roasted and eat on the spot after harrying the village, and the third we sold for a keg of liquor to wash down the flesh. As for the Brahman we shot in the scuffle, we will pay the proper blood-money.' A slight shudder runs through the high-caste Hindu officials who record this candid statement; a sympathetic grin flits across the face of a huge Afghan, who has come wandering down for service or gang-robbery into these jungles where he is to the Bheels as a shark among small pike; and it is clear that we have got into a stratum of society far below Aryan or Brahmanic prejudices."

Enough has been said to show the strange mixture of races and types that go to make the peoples of India. The sevenfold classification, it should be noted, has nothing to do with religions or languages. The fact that

an Indian is of Aryan or Dravidian stock, or a blend of these or other stocks, is no certain guide to his religion or tongue. As regards religions, it will be shown later on that eleven persons out of twelve in India profess either Hinduism or Muhammadanism, the Hindus being in a vast majority; while the twelfth person is ordinarily a Buddhist, or else a half savage who believes in spirits, ghosts, and magic.

The Bheel in Sir Alfred Lyall's description belongs to this last class, as do all the primitive tribes of the hills and jungles throughout India. Indian Muhammadans are of all races, though from political causes they are unevenly distributed over the continent. They are most numerous in north-west India and again in the eastern districts of lower Bengal. West of the Indus, as might be expected from the proximity of the Islamic countries of Persia and Afghanistan, nearly every person is a Muhammadan. In the west and south-west of the Punjab Moslems predominate both in the towns and among the rural population. In the eastern Punjab and in the United Provinces as far east as Benares, the town population is largely Muhammadan, and in places there is a considerable Muhammadan element among the country population. Some Indian Muhammadans are of foreign origin, and show it in their features. But the

great majority are the descendants of Indian converts. In the Punjab one section of a tribe will be Hindu by religion and another Muhammadan. When and why the conversion took place is not always possible to ascertain. In some cases it was no doubt forcible, being pressed upon the vanquished by their Moslem conquerors as the price of life. But more generally it was the result of persuasion and self-interest. In eastern Bengal, where the Muhammadans to-day outnumber the Hindus, the population must evidently have been converted *en masse*. At the time of the Muhammadan conquest Hinduism had little hold on the half-Mongolian half-Dravidian people of these parts, and they readily accepted the new faith. In all regions of the world the religion of the Prophet has always had a great attraction for savage and semi-civilised races, and among them its progress has invariably been rapid. A social system such as Hinduism, with an elaborate theology and a priestly order, offers much greater resistance to a rival creed, whether it be that of Islam or of Christianity. Accordingly we find that Muhammadanism nowadays makes few converts in the Hindu community. But Muhammadans for all that are on the increase in India. Their social customs, which allow the re-marriage of widows and do not favour child marriage,

undoubtedly give them a natural advantage over the Hindus; and among the despised and depressed classes that are practically outside the pale of Hinduism they still win converts. Too much stress can easily be laid on the point that Muhammadanism is essentially a missionary religion, whereas Brahmanism is not; for Islam in India has certainly lost much of the proselytising zeal which it once possessed. But at least it makes the path of the convert easy. It welcomes all comers without regard to race or caste. It assigns to the lowliest convert the full privileges of a believer. It allows him to retain in his new life superstitions and practices that are dear to him. The wonder is that with all these advantages Muhammadanism does not make even greater progress in India than the census registers.

Language in India may or may not be a guide to race. Very often it is not. Of languages in India there is no lack. Thirty or forty distinct Indian languages are enumerated by experts, while the number of dialects is much greater. But these languages fall into three or four groups, and these groups roughly correspond with the racial origins of the population. The two groups of most importance comprise respectively the Indo-European or Aryan languages and the Dravidian. Two minor groups with which we

need not concern ourselves are the Kolarian, comprising the curious and very ancient speech of the primitive tribes of Chota Nagpur, and the Tibetan-Chinese group, of which the Burmese language is the most important. Broadly speaking, the languages of the Aryan group have extended themselves at the expense of the Dravidian. The latter, of which the principal branches are Telugu, Tamil, and Kanarese, hold firmly the south where the people are Dravidian. The Aryan group—Punjabi, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, etc.—are practically the languages of the remainder of the continent. Thus the people of Bengal who have very little Aryan blood speak a language derived from the ancient sanskritic tongue. The same is the case with the mixed Dravidian population of the central regions of India as far south as the Kishna river. This is an important fact, as it shows that notwithstanding the extraordinary varieties of race and speech that are found in India, there is an underlying bond of civilisation in the language and sacred literature of the Aryans. Even in southern India this literature has been widely disseminated among the Dravidian people in their own vernaculars, through the labours of Brahman scholars.

But any account of the races or languages of India would be incomplete without mention

of the influence that the spread of the English language is exerting over the population generally. In 1836, under the powerful advocacy of LORD MACAULAY, a member of the Governor-General's council in Calcutta, the Indian government decided that higher education in the country should be given in English. "The question before us," he wrote, "is simply whether, when it is in our power to teach this language—English—we shall teach languages in which, by universal confession, there are no books on any subject which deserve to be compared with our own; whether, when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, wherever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse; and whether, when we patronise sound philosophy and true history, we shall countenance at the public expense, medical doctrines which would disgrace an English farrier, astronomy which would move laughter in the girls of an English boarding school, history abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long, and geography made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter." Lord Macaulay has been blamed for ignoring the sentimental attachment of the Indian peoples to their ancient book lore and for proposing to replace it in all public institutions by a foreign language and literature. It has

also been said that politically the decision was wrong: that the new educational system cut Indian thought adrift from its old moorings and prematurely launched it on the sea of western speculation: that it destroyed the Indian's old convictions and prejudices without putting anything solid in their place, and gave him intellectual freedom before he was fit to use it. These are objections for which there is a good deal to be said. But on the broad issue as to whether the English language should be the medium of higher education, Lord Macaulay was unquestionably right. If India was to be helped to fall into line with western civilisation and to be admitted to modern knowledge, no other conclusion was possible. The abruptness of the change, and the preponderance given to literature over science in the high schools and colleges, were mistakes of detail, and do not affect the principle. Indian opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of English. Suitable provision everywhere exists for the teaching of oriental languages and literatures. But the youth of the country turns to English because it is at once the door to employment and to knowledge. We are told that throughout the Roman empire the public business was conducted in Latin, and that that language was used in every official act. In the British Indian empire the English language plays

the part that Latin did in the empire of the Cæsars. It is the language of official business. The laws are made in it: the work of the highest courts of justice is conducted in it: the orders of the government are issued in it: and public affairs are discussed in it. In comparison with English the various vernacular languages have merely a local utility Within their respective limits they have a much larger body of readers than English, but English inspires ideas. The educated classes draw their knowledge from English books and newspapers. Behind the vernacular journal is the man who reads English, though he may strangely misinterpret and misuse the information and arguments which he obtains from this source.

It is safe to say that the English language and what it stands for is the most powerful force acting to-day in India in the direction of social and national unity. It has been said that the languages of southern India are as unintelligible in Lahore as they would be in London, and that a native of Calcutta or Bombay is as much a foreigner in Delhi or Peshawar as an Englishman is a foreigner in Rome or Paris. But the Englishman who reads and speaks French does not feel himself wholly a foreigner in Paris. The English-speaking Indian likewise is not a foreigner in any part of India where English is spoken. One

of the novel features of modern Indian life is the frequent holding of Pan-Indian congresses for the discussion of political, social, industrial, religious and other subjects. These assemblies, which bring together the most prominent men from all parts of India, would be impossible were it not for the common basis provided by the English language. It may also be added that they could not be held if India were without railways, as the greater part of Asia still is. When we reflect on all this we see that new forces are operating on the people, and are breaking down the walls of separation that diversities of race and language, to say nothing of religions and the caste system, have erected in the past.

But we must not exaggerate the extent to which a knowledge of English, or indeed any book knowledge at all, is at present possessed by the population. In a population of three hundred million there may be a million persons can read and speak English, and of these many know it very imperfectly. It is the tendency that is important, and the tendency is for English to spread. As to education generally, the Indian population has the distinction of being one of the most illiterate in the world. Only ten per cent. of the male population and one per cent. of the female population can read and write.

Only one boy in four attends school. Outside missionary and other special circles there is practically no female education. Popular prejudice against it is firmly entrenched in the institutions of caste and early marriage, in the purdah system, and in the oriental view of the mission of women. The traditional duty of the Indian woman is to be a wife and look after the household: and it is thought that for this education will spoil her. Nor is there any general desire for schooling for boys. Three-fourths of the people are agriculturists, and the cultivator all the world over is sceptical as to the utility of the three r.s. The Indian peasant believes that they spoil a lad and turn him from the land to town life. The writer in his younger days has been roundly rebuked by sturdy cultivators for suggesting that a school in their village would be a good thing. There is this to be said that the Indian peasant, though illiterate, is not without knowledge. He has been carefully trained from boyhood in the ritual and the religious observances of his forefathers. He hears the ancient epics read in their pithy vernacular form. He is full of lore about crops and soils and birds and beasts. In short, he is a disciplined intelligent person, moulded on a traditional system which in spite of many defects, is not without its good points. This is not an argument for

withholding elementary education from him. But it explains why in rural India a knowledge of reading and writing may not be quite as indispensable as we with our western ideas are disposed to assume.

CHAPTER IV

THE CASTE SYSTEM

THE institution of caste is a peculiar feature of Indian society. In no other country does anything of the same kind exist. It has consequently attracted a great deal of attention, and has been the subject of minute study by very competent observers and scholars.

Caste is a system by which the accident of birth determines once for all the whole course of a man's social and domestic relations. Throughout life he must eat, drink, dress, marry and give in marriage in accordance with the usages of the community in which he is born. The word itself is of Portuguese origin, and is derived from the Latin *castus*, and signifies purity of blood When the Portuguese settled on the coast of India, they were at once struck with this peculiarity of the natives about them. They recorded that the Indians "divide themselves into distinct races or castes (castas) of greater or less dignity, and keep these so superstitiously

that no one of a higher caste can eat and drink with those of a lower." They noted accurately the aspect of the caste system that is most obvious to an outside observer. But in point of fact the marriage aspect of the caste system is of greater importance, and is more fundamental. If it were not for the regulations relating to marriage, the restrictions regarding food and drink would be insufficient to maintain the institution. Its end and object is to keep society rigidly divided into a number of permanent groups and to prevent them from amalgamating. This cannot be accomplished without prohibiting marriages outside the group. Our knowledge of the usages of the caste system as it exists to-day in India is abundant. The chief difficulty in describing its practical working lies in the multitude of the facts. But when we try to account for its origin and to trace its development, we enter a field of enquiry where great differences of opinion exist, and where many theories are met with. Let us begin with this question of origin.

If we should ask an orthodox Hindu how this caste system originated and developed he would refer to the laws of Manu and to other ancient sanscrit texts of a semi-priestly, semi-legal kind. The institutes of Manu might be likened in a very general way, and subject to large qualifications, to the Hebrew book of

Leviticus in our Bible. The work was compiled about A.D. 200. It is a priestly code, and it explains the constitution of Indian society from the point of view of the Brahmanical priesthood. According to Manu, there were three sacred or "twice-born" castes. The Brahman issued from the head of Brahma, the soul of the universe; the Kshattriya or warrior, from his arms; the Vaisya, or husbandman, from his thighs. There was a fourth or Sudra caste, which was not admitted to the sacrifices or to the reading of the Vedas, and whose sole function was to serve the twice-born. Below the Sudra came a multitude of lower castes, the offspring of mixed or irregular marriages, or of fathers who neglected the ceremonial worship; and lowest of all, there were "out-castes." In the comprehensive list of these inferior castes there are names of castes which exist to this day, and various menial and degrading occupations are assigned to them.

The meaning of the epithet "twice-born," which plays so important a part in the religious ideas of Hinduism, may be briefly explained. The second or spiritual birth takes place when the Brahman or Kshattriya boy is taught how to offer his first oblation to the gods, is made to recite short sacred words or Vedic texts which serve as daily prayers, and

is ceremonially invested with the "sacred thread." The ceremony marks the beginning of his spiritual life. Not till then does he become really and truly a member of his divinely appointed caste. The sacred thread, which is a thin coil of three or more loose strands, is worn over the left shoulder. It is of cotton in the case of a Brahman, and of hemp or wool in other cases. It is the dearest possession of the Brahman, the symbol of his divine origin. It is the concrete embodiment of the fundamental ideas of Hinduism.

To return to Manu and his institutes. When modern scholars got to work on the old texts, they saw that underneath the jumble of priestly lore and childish stories there was a basis of fact. For an ancient writer never wholly invents: he takes the material for his fiction from the actual world around him. In this account of the caste system three points were clear. The system was obviously designed to glorify the Brahmans. All through they are seen to have the best of it. Secondly, the basis of the system was descent and purity of blood. And thirdly, occupations or callings were hereditary and position in the caste scale went with the nature of the occupation. In seeking a rational explanation of the origin of caste modern scholars have differed in the weight they have assigned to these several features

in Manu's account, and thereby they have come to somewhat different conclusions.

According to one theory caste arose solely out of occupations. Primitive society, it is said, is a very simple affair. It consists of the rulers, the cultivators, and possibly the priests. These occupations are the property of families, and are hereditary. As society becomes more complex, other occupations emerge, and likewise become hereditary. The later occupations are less dignified than the primary ones, and rank lower in the social scale. In time there is a regular gradation of society on the basis of hereditary occupations, and this is given a certain fixity and rigidity by the sanctions of religion. Of this theory it is enough to say that it fails to account for the peculiarities of Indian caste.

A second theory, which was worked out with great brilliancy and wealth of illustration by the late Sir Denzil Ibbetson in his Punjab Census Report, leans also to community of occupations as accounting for the origin and diversity of Indian castes; but ascribes the form which the caste system finally took to the extraordinary exaltation of the priestly office in India. The Brahmans, in order to exalt their own position, insisted on the necessarily hereditary nature of occupation; and they supported this principle by inventing a purely artificial set of rules

about marriage and inter-marriage, by declaring certain occupations and foods to be impure, and by prescribing the conditions and degrees of social intercourse permitted between the several castes. This theory is open to objections. In no other country have trade guilds or other similar associations of workmen so formed themselves into absolutely closed groups within which alone marriage is permitted. Again, it is difficult to believe that industrial groups of the kind supposed would submit themselves to a strict code of rules about marriage and the like, purely artificial in character and obviously framed in the self-interest of the priests. Indian caste would seem to require for its origin some stronger compelling force than community of occupation.

A third theory has been suggested by a distinguished French orientalist, M. SENART. He points out that among the Greeks and Romans, to whom the Indo-Aryan race was akin, there existed the three group divisions of the family, the clan and the tribe. (In Latin *gens*, *curia*, *tribus*.) These correspond to the family, the sub-caste, and the caste of India. The distinctive feature of the Indian caste system is that a man must not marry within his sub-caste group and must not marry outside his caste group. Similar restrictions on marriage existed in Greece

and Rome. In Rome there was a long struggle before the plebeians obtained the right of lawful marriage with the patrician women. Similarly there were restrictions about food and the hearth-fire in Greece and Rome which recall those in force in India. In India, when a man is excluded from caste, his "tobacco and water" is said to be stopped. He may not drink from an old caste-fellow's vessel or have a pull at his pipe. In Rome the formula was exclusion from water and fire (*aqua et igni*), fire here meaning the sacred fire of the hearth. From these and other analogies M. SENART infers that the caste system of India is merely the extension of the ancient Aryan family system. But if this is so, how is it that while in Europe the family, the clan, and the tribe have been absorbed into the nation, in India they have solidified into cast-iron compartments into which the whole population is distributed and locked up? M. SENART would find the explanation of this remarkable difference in the circumstances of the Aryan settlement in India. The Aryans were a small and scattered people in the midst of alien races. To preserve themselves as a separate race they were driven to fence in the race by high doctrines about descent and purity of blood; and in this they were aided by their Brahman priests.

Such are some of the theories about the origin of Indian castes. The theories are not wholly opposed to each other. They lay hold of different aspects of a very ancient institution which in taking its present shape was exposed to diverse influences. The latest school of investigators in India, while welcoming the clue given by M. SENART to analogous institutions of other portions of the Indo-European race, is disposed to lay stress on the colour element and racial antagonism apparent in the ancient scheme of classes as given in Manu. The very word used to denote these classes in sanscrit means "colour." It is conjectured that the Aryans subdued the inferior Dravidian race, established themselves as conquerors and captured women according to their needs. By marrying the captured women they had to some extent modified their original type; but a certain pride of blood remained in them, and when their number had increased to a certain point, they closed their ranks to all further intermixture of blood. The principle thus established, the formation of castes and sub-castes proceeded apace. The caste in each case stood for purity of blood. The invaders averted complete amalgamation with the inferior race by taking women but not giving them. They behaved in fact towards the Dravidians whom they conquered in exactly the same way as some

planters in America behaved to the African slaves whom they imported. Manu, for instance, reserved his strongest invective for the son of a Brahman woman by a Sudra. He described him as "that lowest of mortals," and condemned him to live outside the village, to clothe himself in the garments of the dead, to eat from broken dishes, to execute criminals, and to carry out the corpses of friendless men. There is evidently race antagonism and colour prejudice in this.

From the question of the origin of caste we may now turn to the working of the institution in practice. This will best be seen by taking specific instances.

Let us first take the case of the Rajputs as they are found in Rajputana, the home of the race. We find them divided into a number of clans. A clansman would not describe himself merely as a Rajput. He would add that he is a "Sisodia," a "Rathor," a "Kachwaha," a "Jadon," and so on, mentioning his clan. The caste rule under which he lives requires him to marry a Rajput woman and prohibits him from marrying a woman of his own clan. He is thus between two circles. He may not marry outside the larger circle, and he may not marry within the inner one. The larger circle is known as the "endogamous" (*gamos*, Greek for marriage), or marrying-in group. The smaller

one is the "exogamous," or marrying-out group. The "endogamous" or outer group represents the man's "caste," in this case the Rajput caste; and the "exogamous" group is his sub-caste All Rajputs are his fellow-castemen, but Rajputs of his clan belong, as it were, to one family. As a Rajput clan may number one hundred thousand persons, his circle of "prohibited degrees" may be very large. Theoretically, as far as blood is concerned, our Rajput may seek a wife in any Rajput clan except his own. But practically there is a well-recognised table of precedence among the clans, and our Rajput, though for due consideration he may take his wife from a clan below his own on the precedence list, cannot, without loss of social esteem, give his daughter to a Rajput of a lower clan. He must marry his daughter in a clan either above, or at least equal to, his own. The custom is known as "hypergamy" or marrying-up. In it we see the feeling which inspired Manu's invective against marriages of women with men of lower degree. It is a very inconvenient custom, and is largely responsible for the existence in the past of the barbarous practice of female infanticide. The higher the clan, the greater is the clansman's difficulty to find a husband for his daughter; and as an unmarried daughter is a disgrace to the house, the

punctilious Rajput in old days made away with baby daughters.

In other matters our Rajput has to observe caste customs at every turn. He must not allow a widow in his family to re-marry, much less himself marry a widow. His wife must keep *purdah*. He must see that his daughters are married at an age when English girls are scarcely out of the nursery. He may not dine with any one who is not a Rajput. He may accept water, if on a journey, from certain castes, but not from others. He ought not to touch a plough or engage in menial occupation. To disobey these rules does not necessarily mean loss of caste; that penalty is reserved for the worst offences. But disobedience invariably means some loss of caste esteem.

The instance of the Rajput clans of Rajputana that we have taken is in some ways peculiar. They are organised more on the tribal than on the caste system, as the latter is usually understood. The caste system in the present day very largely turns, as will be seen later on, on occupation; and the tendency is to form smaller and smaller "endogamous" groups, outside of which the casteman must not marry. In Rajputana the status of a Rajput comes not from occupation but from descent. The poorest clansman deems himself and is deemed by his fellows

the equal of his chief, and between Rajput and Rajput, notwithstanding the numerous clans, there is no caste restriction. All this seems to show that the institution has fallen lightly upon the Rajputs, and that we are really in presence of an ancient tribal organisation which, though it has been absorbed into Hinduism and transformed into a caste, resembles in many ways the highland clans of Scotland two hundred years ago.

The Mahrattas and the Jats are two other important instances of castes of tribal if not national type. The Mahratta race is widely diffused over the Bombay Presidency, and is four millions strong. The whole race practically constitutes one caste for marriage and for other purposes. A Mahratta is a Mahratta by descent and his status is not affected by his occupation, though he is generally a cultivator. The Jats in the Punjab are what the Mahrattas are in the Deccan. They are the dominant tribe of owners and cultivators; and like the Mahrattas they form a single caste. What is also interesting is that Brahmanical Hinduism sits lightly upon the Jats. They allow widow marriage and they follow their own tribal customs in matters of inheritance and the like without regard to Hindu law. Indeed, there is some reason to think that Mahrattas and Jats were Scythian tribes who came into India at a

comparatively late date and never fully assimilated the Hindu ideas of caste.

These ideas are seen to perfection among the Brahmans themselves. Theoretically, all Brahmans form one caste. But the practice is very different. They are split up into an immense number of groups and sub-groups, and these groups and sub-groups for matrimonial and other purposes are classified in a most intricate fashion. A Brahman may not marry inside his own sub-group, and he may marry only with one or other of a few specified groups or sub-groups. A Brahman's wife must not only be a Brahman, but she must be a Brahman of a certain group. In one province alone there are two hundred major groups of Brahmans, none of which allow intermarriages. A Brahman of one group may even object to take water from a Brahman of another group. How is this to be explained? The underlying general cause is no doubt intense pride in the supreme position of the Brahman relative to the rest of mankind, and an equally intense fear of pollution through contact with unclean or degrading persons or things. There are many Brahmans who follow occupations which are considered degrading. They sink in the social scale, and this in India means loss of caste privileges.

So far we have dealt with castes of the

highest standing. Below them there is an immense array of lower castes. The census enumerates over two thousand three hundred minor castes. The number of minor castes is innumerable. The names of many of the most widely diffused castes indicate occupations. There is the writer caste, the herdsmen caste, the milkmen caste, the blacksmiths, the village watchmen, and so on. Community of occupation or function has evidently in these cases formed the basis of caste division. Each of these castes professes to have a traditional occupation, though many of the members have abandoned it. A blacksmith or a herdsman will often be found among the cultivators of a village. And as occupations change, new castes and sub-castes are thrown up. The Chumar caste works in hides and leather, and is regarded as unclean. But if a group in the caste should take to a more cleanly occupation, it will tend to form itself into a separate caste, will probably change its name, and so rise in the social scale. We are not unacquainted in our own country with the art of rising in the world. There are gradations of respectability, and men ordinarily find their wives in their own class. But the peculiarity of the Indian system is that the groups are much more permanent than with us, that they repel each other, that intercourse

is prohibited by social and religious penalties, and that the individual, however high he may rise, carries his caste and its disabilities about him till his death.

Caste is enforced by means of governing communities, often called panchayats. The caste may be likened to a guild or trades union, and governs itself. It sees that no member of the caste engages in a degrading occupation, works for lower wages than his brethren, eats forbidden food, or marries a woman of another caste. The extreme penalty is expulsion. No one will then eat or drink with the offender, visit his house, or marry his daughter. The Brahman will not serve him, the barber will not shave him, the washerman will not wash for him.

Attempts have been made in different parts of India to form a precedence table of castes, in the order of social esteem in which they are held by Hindus in the present day. The higher castes present no great difficulty. The Brahman heads the list in all provinces, followed by the modern representatives of the "twice-born" classes. Below the "twice born" no uniform arrangement has proved possible. In northern India there are a good many castes of moderate respectability from whom most Brahmans will take water. These correspond to the fourth or "clean" Sudra class of Manu's code. Below these are classes

from whom Brahmans will not take water, but whose touch does not pollute. Below these again come the "untouchables." But even here there are degrees. Inasmuch as the cow is sacred, the extreme of untouchability is reached by castes that will eat its flesh. In southern India, where Brahmanism has its stronghold, an extremely elaborate code of pollution exists. There are castes whose members defile a Brahman at a distance of twenty-four or thirty-six or even sixty-four feet, as the case may be. They carry an atmosphere of impurity about them. They may not enter a Hindu temple of the humblest sort, or pass through the high caste quarter of the village. When they see a Brahman they must leave the road or announce their approach by a special cry, like lepers in the middle ages. The very word "pariah" of our dictionaries comes from the name of the great labouring caste (the Paraiyan) of the southern districts of Madras. They to men of the higher castes are unclean and polluted. Few of us when we use the word actually realise the full infamy of its meaning in its country of origin.

The "depressed classes" in India form a vast multitude. Their numbers are estimated at from fifty to sixty millions. A question that is agitating Hinduism at the present moment is as to whether these classes should

be counted as Hindus or not. Ten years ago the answer would have been emphatically in the negative. Even now the conservative feeling of the country is for their exclusion. But the conscience of the more advanced section of the educated Hindus is a little sensitive on the point. It is awkward to be reminded by rival Muhammadan politicians that more than one-third of the supposed total Hindu population is not accepted by Hindus as a part of themselves, is not allowed the ministration of Brahman priests, is excluded from Hindu shrines. It is obviously desirable in presence of such an argument to claim the "depressed castes" as within the pale of Hinduism. But if they are to be so reckoned, logic demands that they should be treated with greater consideration than at present. Educated Hindus see this, and the uplifting of these castes figures prominently on the programmes of Indian social conferences. But the stoutest-hearted reformer admits to himself that the difficulties in the way of effective action in this matter are great, so strong is the hold that caste has on the Indian mind.

An instance will best illustrate this. In the south of India there is a large and important sect known as the Lingayats or worshippers of Siva. The sect arose in the twelfth century as a protest against Brah-

manical arrogance. It repudiated caste distinctions, rejected (as it rejects to this day) the ministrations of Brahman priests, and took its members from all classes. But a reaction set in. The descendants of the original converts formed themselves into a high caste section, closed their ranks, and refused to marry or eat with the rest of the community. The latter in a similar way formed themselves into separate sub-castes based on the social distinctions which the founder had expressly abjured. In the 1901 census the Lingayat community asked to be recorded as Lingayat Brahmans, Lingayat Vaisyas, Lingayat Sudras, as the case might be, thus claiming the very caste divisions which their founder had repudiated. In short caste is in the air of India. It infects Muhammadans. It even affects the communities of Indian Christians. The early Roman Catholic missionaries retained it among their converts. It is one of the most serious questions with which modern missionary bodies have to deal.

It is easy to say hard things of the caste system and to point to its defects. The two practices of infant marriage and perpetual widowhood are so opposed to western ideas that any institution with which they are bound up or which encourages them seems to be self-condemned. Of infant marriage as practised in Bengal there can be no defence.

But a more rational custom prevails elsewhere, and the instances of the Rajput clans of Rajputana and of the Jats of the Punjab show that the caste system in this respect is capable of reform. The instance of the Jats again shows that the prohibition of widow marriage is not an essential feature of the caste system, though it is in accord with the Brahmanical theory of marriage and with the sentiments of the great mass of the population. From the western point of view the whole position of women in India is wrong. But the West is not the East, and the conservative Hindu would probably say that as things are in the East the caste system, with its doctrine that every woman should always be under male guardianship, makes for the security of the family. The perpetuation of the family and the purity of its blood are the root ideas of Hinduism. It is impossible to judge the institution of caste fairly unless the Hindu position is understood.

Caste may also be attacked as destructive of the spirit of humanity and incompatible with national life. That it narrows the circle of human sympathy is obvious; and the absence of any sense of nationality has always been a characteristic of the Indian peoples. On the other hand it may be said of caste that within a limited range it shows extraordinary power of evoking sympathy and

action for the common good and of maintaining the traditional moral law. The caste man is not an isolated unit. He is a member of a community, however humble it may be. Its restraints are always upon him. Its penalties are heavy and effective. Conservative Hindus dread any weakening of this bond, perceiving nothing that would take its place.

Is caste decaying? A confident answer is not possible. The spread of western education in India, the habit of travel, the growth of social and political discussion are powerful dissolvents. But as yet they affect a very limited class. Close observers tell us that the tendency to confine inter-marriage to the narrowest circle within the caste was never stronger, and that infant marriage and perpetual widowhood are usages by no means on the decline.

CHAPTER V

RELIGIONS

THE three great religions of India are Hinduism, Muhammadanism, and Buddhism. Buddhism is now practically confined to Burma, though as we have seen in the historical section it was the state religion of India for some centuries before and after the birth of Christ. The continent of India proper is partitioned between Muhammadanism and Hinduism in unequal proportions, the Hindus outnumbering the Moslems by more than three to one. Outside these great historical religions there are other creeds which have a substantial number of adherents in India. There are in round numbers nearly four million Christians, three millions Sikhs, over one million Jains. And lastly there are some ten millions of persons belonging to aboriginal and half-civilised tribes who for want of a better term are classed as "animists."

Hinduism and Muhammadanism are poles apart. The one is the antithesis of the other. Hinduism is the genuine product of the

Indian mind, It is at once subtle and gross, spiritual and sensual. It is accommodating and elastic, ready to absorb other rites and superstitions and to find a place among its own divinities for other strange gods. It has a priesthood for sacrificial purposes, but no church, no official organisation. It has no clear-cut religious tradition or dogmatic code. It is intensely aristocratic and anti-social. So far from believing that all men are equal it grades them into castes and it pronounces most of them unclean. Muhammadanism on the other hand is foreign to the soil. It is not Aryan but Semitic. It is a badge of conquest. It is a clear-cut, definite creed; the creed of a single book, the Koran. It allows no compromise or accommodations with other faiths. It is sternly monotheistic. There is one God, and He is to be worshipped without image or symbol. It regards a religion such as popular Hinduism as gross idol-worship, a thing to be put down summarily, It is intensely democratic. It knows nothing of caste distinctions. In Islam all men are equal. Religions so opposed could not amalgamate without losing their identities. But they may keep on good terms with each other; and when exciting causes are not present this is generally the case in India. The Hindu in quiet times is disposed to regard his Muhammadan neighbour as belonging to a

separate caste with which he has no communion, but which has as good a right to exist as have those Hindu castes with the members of which he does not eat or drink. The Muhammadan regards Hinduism as the religion of the country and as having on that account a title to respect. In some parts of India Hindus and Muhammadans are on quite friendly terms. They will assist each other in their respective religious festivals and processions. They will occasionally worship at each others' shrines. But everywhere this happy state of things is not found. There are towns and districts where the two religions face each other like armies on a battle-field, and where the slightest provocation given by one side or the other will bring on furious riots and bloodshed. A cow slaughtered in the Hindu quarter, or a dead pig thrown into a Muhammadan mosque is the certain warning of coming trouble. It is then that the special function of British rule becomes apparent. It has to keep the peace of India.

What is Hinduism? What are its tenets and its sects? How is it marked off from Buddhism or other indigenous religions, or from the various primitive beliefs that are grouped under the term "animism"? These questions do not admit of clear and precise answers. If we were to ask a Hindu scholar,

a student of the sanskrit sacred texts, he would refer us to these texts and tell us that they explain what Hinduism is. But this is only postponing the difficulty. For the texts cover an immense tract of time and do not speak with the same voice. We begin in the Vedas with the great "nature" gods—the Sun, the Sky, the Dawn, the Storm—and with simple sacrifices and oblations by which they are to be honoured by the householder. There is no trace in the Vedas of the belief in the transmigration of souls which is now a fundamental principle of Hindu religion. In the later text-books the "nature" gods give place to Brahma, Siva, Vishnu, and other major deities of the Hindu pantheon as we know it; and the doctrines of caste and transmigration, the sanctity and superiority of the Brahman, the merit of sacrifice correctly performed by him, come to the front. Still later on in the early centuries of the Christian era great additions were made to the number of deities worshipped and extraordinary legends and myths to account for them were invented. Vishnu, as the god who preserved the world, was given many shapes and was described as having appeared to man in many forms. His two most popular incarnations are Rama, the hero prince of the Ramayana epic, and Krishna, one of the great characters in the Mahabharata. Rama and Krishna to

this day count their worshippers by millions. There is hardly a Hindu peasant in upper India who is ignorant of these romantic personages or who fails to identify them with Vishnu. It is conjectured that in these additions to Hindu mythology and worship we have the process by which the indigenous races of India were brought under Brahmanical influence, and their deities admitted to honour and connected by means of myths with the Aryan gods. This explanation is certainly in harmony with the increased grossness and superstition found in the later text-books and manuals of popular Hinduism, and it is borne out by what actually takes place at the present day in the wilder parts of India. Accurate observers have described the steps by which an uncivilised forest tribe, whose beliefs are limited to vague ideas about ghosts and goblins and spirits dwelling in rocks and trees and streams, comes over to Brahmanism, bringing with it old superstitions and worship and retaining them under Hindu forms.

The text-books therefore will not help us to define Hinduism, unless we are restricted to particular books, chosen either on account of their antiquity or of their contents. It may possibly be thought that the Vedas alone should be taken as the test of what Hinduism is. This test has often approved itself to Indian religious reformers, but its defect is

that it excludes at least nine-tenths of what Hinduism to-day accepts as fundamental. Reformers who appeal to the Vedas end by forming sects. Even if they and their communities continue Hindu in name they are put out of caste and regarded as unorthodox by the great mass of professing Hindus.

The Vedas alone will not therefore serve at a test. Near to the Vedas in order of time are certain ancient and revered ritual books and commentaries, known as Brahmanas and Upanishads, which date back several centuries before the Christian era. Shall we find in them what Hinduism is? The fundamental ideas of Hinduism are certainly to be found there. But we are met with the difficulty that the Brahmanas have one voice and the Upanishads another. The Brahmanas are concerned with the ceremonies of sacrifice and with the blessings which a sacrifice correctly offered by a Brahman will bring to the offerer in this world and hereafter. The Upanishads teach the futility of sacrifice and the necessity for knowledge; and the knowledge they teach is how the individual soul may escape from earthly existence by absorption into the world-soul. This world-soul (atman or brahma) is conceived as the eternal essence animating nature. The individual soul and the world-soul are identical,

and correct knowledge according to the Upanishads consists in realising this.

Thus in the earliest religious Hindu books following the Vedas there are two distinct religious systems, the one concerned with concrete gods and goddesses that required to be daily appeased through rites and sacrifices, with the veneration of Brahmans, and with their divine nature and priesthood; the other holding all these things to be vanity and illusion, preaching the weariness of the flesh, and striving to escape from individual existence through the gateway of true knowledge. These two systems went their separate ways and increasingly diverged. The ceremonial religion grew more and more extravagant and grotesque. The reveries of the Upanishads hardened into a systematic theology, taking different forms in the hands of different teachers. These men developed the tremendous doctrines of *karma* and transmigration. *Karma* literally means action, or what is brought about by action; and transmigration implies an unbroken chain of existences. As a man soweth that shall he reap; if not in his present life at all events in another life in some better or worse shape. *Karma* was thus the fate or destiny of man, and to make the best of it right knowledge and the dispelling of ignorance were required. The different teachers busied themselves with

providing the right knowledge. The best known and still most popular school, known as the Vedanta or "goal of the Veda," elaborated the immature thought of the Upanishads. It worked out the doctrine of *maya* or illusion. "There is one thing, Brahma; there is nothing else"; that is, God is all. There is no real universe, no reality of experience. What appears solid earth or pain or pleasure, are mere dreams. They are nightmares to be escaped from, and the only way of escape is by getting rid of all desire, and so breaking the chain of existence; the individual spirit will then merge into the universal spirit and so find reality. To the western mind this sounds very melancholy and unpractical. Another and later school of Hindu religious philosophy, that has had and still has great influence, is more akin to Christian thought. It held that individual souls were distinct from the world-soul; it taught that man's error lay in want of faith or trust, not in ignorance; and it placed his salvation, or release from successive existences, in faith or love of the supreme being.

But it may be asked "Are not these speculations mere philosophies of the closet; have they anything to do with Hinduism as a religion?" Strange to say they have. They are interwoven with the fabric of Hindu

popular beliefs. They account for the resignation and the mild pessimism of the Hindu mind. They have made transmigration and *karma* very real things to the humblest and most unlettered peasant. They have given him the idea that spirit is everywhere behind matter. He may worship many gods, demons and deified heroes; but he dimly believes that they are part of a greater unity. In his actual observances he may be classed as a polytheist, one who has many gods; but mentally he is a pantheist, one who sees God in everything. Sitting beneath a *pipal* or "sacred fig" tree the present writer has heard a peasant say "Parameshwar" (the lord of all) "is in this tree; he is in the roots; he is in the leaves; he is everywhere in the world." The rustic spoke the thought of the Vedanta. Yet in his everyday observances, his veneration of Brahmans, his pilgrimage to sacred rivers and holy shrines, he was an ordinary Hindu indistinguishable from the crowd. It may be added that the link between philosophic and popular Hinduism is supplied by the great epic poems of India, especially the Ramayana. Large portions of these poems reproduce the spiritual and speculative ideas of the early sages. An adaptation of the Ramayana made in the speech of the people by a genuine poet and religious reformer, Tulsi Das, at the end of

the sixteenth century, is the bible of the peasant in northern India. In telling the story of the hero prince Rama, the god Vishnu in human form, the author has brought in his own lofty conceptions of a personal god, and of reunion with him through passionate faith and devotion. Ignorant, superstitious, caste-ridden and idolatrous though the average Hindu is, he is not without glimpses of purer and more spiritual ideas. And to this fact and to the essentially religious cast of the Hindu mind is due the frequent rise in India of new sects and reformed beliefs. Any earnest, spiritually-minded teacher can count on a following of devoted disciples. The pity is that in such cases the new light should so speedily grow dim. The sect may live, but its beliefs and practices usually become as gross and superstitious as those of popular Hinduism.

So far we have not discovered from the Brahmanic scriptures what Hinduism is. In them the boldest philosophic speculation goes hand in hand with popular polytheism of the crudest kind. Many attempts to define Hinduism have been made. A Hindu authority defined it as " what the Hindus or a major portion of the Hindus do." A distinguished English authority described it as " the collection of rites, worships, beliefs, traditions and mythologies that are sanctioned

by the sacred books and ordinances of the Brahmans, and are propagated by Brahmanic teaching." It has also been called "a tangled jungle of disorderly superstitions, ghosts and demons, demi-gods, and deified saints, household gods, tribal gods, universal gods, with their countless shrines and temples and the din of their discordant rites—deities who abhor a fly's death, and those who delight still in human victims." Popular Hinduism is thus something very different from our ordinary notion of a religion. It is largely a social system, founded no doubt on the Vedas and the post-Vedic scriptures, but with little real connection with them save on three or four points. These are veneration for Brahmans, the caste system, the doctrine of *karma* and transmigration of souls, and the holiness of the cow. But the basis of the whole fabric is the divine right of the Brahmans. "A man may disbelieve in the Hindu trinity; he may invent new gods of his own, however foul and impure; he may worship them with the most revolting orgies; he may even abandon all belief in supernatural powers, and yet remain a Hindu. But he must reverence and feed the Brahmans, he must abide by caste rules and restrictions, he must preserve himself from ceremonial pollution, and from contact and communion with the unclean."

It seems strange to us, to whom a church is

an organised community with a defined creed and an administrative body, to find that Hinduism has none of these things. There is no pope or high priest or church council to pronounce decisions or prescribe rites. There is no ecclesiastical capital or centre. There are places noted for learned scholars or pandits, such as Benares, Muttra, or Tanjore; and the collective opinion of these persons, if given, will carry weight among certain classes of Hindus within a certain radius. But that is all. Worshippers of Vishnu under any of his various forms—Krishna, Rama, Jagannath—would not accept the ruling of Saivite pandits, that is, followers of Siva; and *vice versa*. Nor is there any certain way of enforcing a decision. Thus Hinduism, so far as internal government goes, is a chaos. And as a result of this it is perpetually transforming itself, splitting up into sects, taking in new deities, adopting new forms of worship. Taking first the orthodox mass of Hindus, they roughly divide themselves into Saivites or adherents of Siva and Vishnuites or adherents of Vishnu. The division is not a hard and fast one, as a person may and often does worship both. But the division is important in this way, that it leads to subdivisions. Thus the adherent of Siva or Mahadeo (the great god) is very likely to address himself to one of Siva's goddess

wives, of whom there are many, following in each case the appropriate ritual. The god himself is satisfied with a few flowers and a little water. His wife, the grim and savage goddess Kali, whose debased worship is popular in Bengal, requires the blood of victims. In the same part of India other female deities are worshipped with obscene and abominable rites. Vishnuites may do honour to Vishnu under any of his numerous human shapes. In Oudh he is Rama, the brave hero of romance. In Muttra he is Krishna, the amorous prince of cowherds. In Orissa he is the famous Jagannath, the "lord of the world." The last case is instructive as illustrating the way in which a purely local god is taken over by Brahmans and identified as one of the great gods of classical Hinduism. Jagannath's round shapeless head and armless stumps recall the rude idol of some primitive tribe, and the legends about him are evidently of local origin. But by the simple process of making him one of Vishnu's numerous appearances on earth, the primitive god and his exploits have been placed to the credit of Brahmanism.

Besides the great gods and goddesses of Brahmanic tradition rural India has its own local divinities. Those who know the Indian peasant say that he is quite as much concerned with the unnamed powers of his village as

with the recognised deities. These "godlings," as they are called, are purely local, often without distinct names or functions. Their presence is denoted by a rough idol or a single block of stone or wood placed under a tree or rock, or on some high place. It is daubed with vermilion colour as a token of reverence. There the women will make simple offerings of milk or fruit, or light a lamp at night. Some are kindly spirits who watch over the village. Others are harmful and have to be propitiated. But whether kindly or harmful they are closer to the peasant than the great gods of the Brahmans, and are bound up with his house, his fields, and his cattle. They can also be worshipped without priestly help. They have come down to him from primitive times when as yet there were no Vedic scriptures and Brahmanic ritual. They represent the belief of uncivilised man in an unseen company of spirits and ghosts, peopling all the objects about him. They are old pagan superstitions, which he retains along with a vague belief in the Vedas, a very real reverence for Brahmans, and a distant respect for the great gods who can only be worshipped with their aid.

Such is Hinduism in its crudest forms. The higher placed the Hindu is and the more honourable his caste, the more closely will he follow the rites prescribed by Brahman priests

and place himself under the rule of life which they approve. He will hear the *shastras* or sacred texts read though he may not understand them, he will give gifts to Brahmans, he will visit holy places which Siva or Vishnu or some incarnation of the latter honours with his presence, he will bathe in the sacred Ganges on appointed days, and he will be scrupulously exact in what he eats or drinks or touches, lest he be defiled. There is no congregational worship or "going to church," and set religious exercises are few. But ritual enters into his daily life to an extent inconceivable to us. Among the elect of the population who are versed in the Vedic tradition, and in the religious philosophy of the Vedanta or other orthodox schools, purer forms of belief and worship are found. Such men condemn the practices around them as debased and superstitious; they regard Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Siva the destroyer as but three aspects of the supreme spirit, to be worshipped by meditation, holy hymns and extreme sanctity of life. In many Brahman households of southern India this austere and learned orthodoxy may be found.

Scattered through the country there are sects, often large and influential, which neglect or deny the regular gods of Hinduism, or refuse to acknowledge the supremacy and

accept the ministrations of Brahmans. These are unorthodox sects. Whether they are outside Hinduism or not depends on circumstances. In the south of India the sect of the Lingayats, now numbering several millions of persons, rejected Brahmans and caste restrictions some centuries ago. They worship Siva but they have their own ritual and their own priesthood. They are unorthodox, but they are reckoned as Hindus. They represent dissenters who broke away from orthodox Hinduism on the point of Brahmanic supremacy. Many other sects have a similar origin. The inferior classes, for instance, cannot but feel that they have a very small place in Brahmanic Hinduism. The lowest castes may not enter the temples of Siva or Vishnu. They are not recognised as Hindus. Consequently, if a religious reformer arises, preaching that all men are equal and offering a religion in which the Brahman has no pride of place, the common people hear him gladly. At no time has India been without such teachers.

British rule, bringing with it western knowledge new standards of morality and new social ideas, has had its effect on the old established religions of India. Among the educated classes some have cut themselves completely adrift from Hindu philosophy and theology. Others have striven to reform

Hinduism from within. Thus originated the movements known as the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Somaj. The Brahmo Samaj is now an old society. It has been described as an "anæmic religion," a weak blend of Christian and Vedic ideas. It rejects caste, the *purdah* system and other trammels inconvenient to modern life, and it provides a morality and a reformed worship acceptable to educated and travelled Bengali families. But it has not appealed to the masses, and the professing community is very small.

The Arya Somaj is a younger and much more robust movement. It has its roots in Hindu philosophy and Hindu religious ideas. It is actively opposed to Christianity. It preaches social and religious reform, but it takes its stand on the Vedas and professes to be merely a return to the primitive religion of the Aryans. Its missionaries appeal to Indian national sentiment. Though it teaches belief in one supreme being, and condemns pilgrimages, idol worship, bathing in sacred streams and other ceremonial observances, it deals gently with the institution of caste and accepts the doctrine of successive re-births or transmigration. In these and other ways it avoids too sharp a breach with popular Hinduism. It is an endeavour to promote reform on Indian lines, and its activities have on occasions extended into politics. Its

members belong mostly to the educated middle classes in the towns of northern India, and their numbers have increased rapidly in recent years. It is a genuine movement of a very interesting kind, though in the judgment of some observers it is reactionary and mischievous.

We may now turn to three religions which are not included in Hinduism, but which drew their inspiration from it. These are Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism.

Sikhism as a distinct creed is comparatively modern. Its leading doctrines—the divine unity, the brotherhood of man, the rejection of caste and the uselessness of idol worship—have been preached in India for many centuries by a long and distinguished line of Hindu religious reformers. They were not novel when they took root among the sturdy peasantry of the eastern Punjab in the fifteenth century. "Sikh" means a disciple, and "guru," the name given by the Sikhs to their spiritual leaders, means "teacher." Their first gurus kept strictly within the pale of Hinduism. But the savage persecution which the later gurus and their disciples underwent from the Muhammadans drew the Sikhs together as a separate community with a written body of doctrine and distinctive observances. They became a military sect and a political power. Since the Sikh empire vanished, the

tendency among them has been towards Brahmanic Hinduism. They are Hindus, yet Hindus with a difference.

Buddhism and Jainism are not among the religions that influence the Indian peoples. Buddhism prevails in Burma; but in India proper it is found only among Mongolian races in parts of the Himalayan region bordering on Tibet, and among them in a most debased and superstitious form. Jainism is professed by a comparatively small sect, and it tends to shade off into ordinary Hinduism. Many Jains employ Brahmans in their domestic worship, venerate the cow, and often worship in Hindu temples. Jainism and Buddhism have much in common, and up to recent years Jainism was believed to be an offshoot of Buddhism. It is now known that it originated independently of though at the same time as Buddhism; that is, in the sixth century before Christ. Buddhism, as it was taught by its great founder, Gautama Buddha, was an austere, resigned philosophy. He taught that existence was an evil, and that the way to break the chain of successive existences lay in stifling personal desire. Thus arose the famous doctrine of nirvana, or extinction as the flame of a lamp. Nirvana was to be reached, not by rites or ceremonies, priestly powers or gods, but by self-control and compassion for others. The marvel is

that out of this austere philosophy should have came a world-religion, a religion that is professed by one-third of the human race. How this came about lies outside the scope of this book, though it forms one of the most interesting chapters in the history of religions. But two remarks of a general kind may be made. Buddhism, as a religion, is not the same thing as Gautama's philosophy. Everywhere it permits and encourages the veneration, if not worship, of Gautama and other holy personages; and in most countries it is as corrupt and mechanical as the Brahmanism against which its founder revolted. Secondly, its professed adherents with hardly an exception hold it in conjunction with other and more intimate beliefs. Burmese Buddhism is said to be a thin veneer of philosophy laid over a main structure of demon worship. "Buddhism supplies the superficial polish. In the hour of great heart searchings the Burman falls back on his primæval beliefs." Buddhism in short is a formal system of duty, morality and benevolence. In practice it is supplemented from other sources. But notwithstanding its lack of emotion and warmth it has unmistakably marked, and in the main for good, the character of the peoples that have come under its influence. The Indian caste system and the degraded position assigned in Hinduism to women, to mention two

matters only, are impossible in a Buddhist country.

If the people of Burma were not Buddhists, their spirit and demon beliefs would cause them to be classed as "animists." The term "animism" has been invented to cover the medley of superstitions which are found among rude and primitive races. It includes the worship of inanimate objects, such as rocks and stones, believed to possess in themselves some kind of mysterious power. It includes the belief in the existence of souls or spirits moving about the world, which can take up their abode in some object and make that object something to be worshipped or used to protect individuals. One spirit presides over cholera, another over smallpox, another over cattle disease. "Some haunt rocks, others haunt trees, others are associated with rivers, whirlpools, waterfalls, or strange pools hidden in the depths of the hills." There are many hill and forest tribes in India whose beliefs are of this kind, and who are entirely outside the pale of Hinduism. They are accordingly classed as Animists. Other tribes there are a little more advanced, who are learning the rudiments of Hinduism under the guidance of some stray Brahman priest, and are growing ashamed of their old observances. When the census enumerator comes round they may possibly class themselves as

Hindus. The census return of ten million Animists very inadequately represents the number of persons in India whose real beliefs are of this character. In fact, between Animism and Hinduism there is no hard and fast line. The one melts imperceptibly into the other. We have seen that the ordinary Hindu peasant, while worshipping the regular deities of Brahmanism, performs rites to the rustic "godlings" of his village. These "godlings" represent the primitive superstitions of India. Popular Hinduism, in short, is saturated with animistic beliefs.

Animism of late years has received great attention, as the superstitions and customs which it covers take us back to an early stage in the history of man, and throw light on the still more primitive state of which there is no record, and on his subsequent advance. In themselves they are neither interesting nor instructive. Save to the professed student the savage or semi-savage is apt to be wearisome.

Turning now to Muhammadanism, we may note that it does not present the speculative problems of purely Indian religions. It has had a great influence on India, but for India of to-day its interest is political rather than religious. Religions in the East take the place of nationalities. The seventy millions of professing Muhammadans in India

are for many purposes a nation. In administrative matters the British Government has constantly to consider Indian Moslems as a separate community, with interests distinct from and often conflicting with those of the rest of the population.

Of the doctrines of Muhammadanism little need be here said. Its history as a world religion and its theological tenets have been dealt with in another volume of this series. In India it presents some peculiarities, owing to the extreme ignorance which prevails among the Moslem population in some parts of India, and to the reaction upon Indian Musulmans of Hindu religions and observances. In the country to the north-east of Calcutta over twenty million persons, representing a vast majority of the agricultural population, are nominally Muhammadans. They are as fanatical as they are ignorant. They are easily stirred up to do battle with Hindus in the name of Allah, but of the Koran or even the leading principles of Islam they know little or nothing. Their practical religion is a compound of animistic superstitions and Brahmanical customs. They are almost as much infected with caste prejudices as their Hindu neighbours. In the Punjab, where rural society is organised on the tribal system, it is a common thing to find one section of the tribe Hindu and the other section Musulman.

Thus there are Hindu Rajputs and Jats and Muhammadan Rajputs and Jats. The Muhammadan sections, for all social, tribal and other purposes, were till recently exactly as much Rajputs or Jats as their Hindu brethren. Nowadays the tendency everywhere in India is towards stricter observance of religious distinctions. Of the Musulman Rajput the following graphic picture has been drawn: "His social customs are unaltered, his tribal restrictions are unrelaxed, his rules of marriage and inheritance unchanged; and almost the only difference is that he shaves his scalp lock and the upper edge of his moustache, repeats the Muhammadan creed in a mosque, and adds the Musulman to the Hindu wedding ceremony. The local saints and deities still have their shrines even in villages held wholly by Musulmans and are still regularly worshipped by the majority, though the practice is gradually declining. The Hindu family priests are still kept up and consulted as of old, and the Brahmans are still fed on the usual occasions, and in many cases still officiate at weddings side by side with the Muhammadan priest." It does not follow that the conversion of these Punjab tribesmen some centuries ago was skin-deep, or that it would not be difficult to recall them to Hinduism. Such an idea would not occur to either the Muhammadan or to the Hindu.

The Muhammadan, though his knowledge of doctrine may be of the scantiest kind, is intensely proud of his creed. To the Hindu a Muhammadan as such is casteless, or is treated as belonging to a separate caste, and the gulf is unbridgeable by conversion. The usages that are found among Muhammadan tribesmen in the Punjab really illustrate the fact that Hinduism is more a social than a religious system. In the easy-going *camaraderie* of the countryside it does not strike the Musulman Rajput or Jat that the Hindu usages he has adopted are inconsistent with his belief in "Allah and Muhammad His Prophet."

Muhammadanism in the towns and among the educated classes is less affected by Hindu practices and superstitions. Its attitude to Hinduism is also less friendly. In the towns the two religions tend to draw off into separate camps. In most towns the Muhammadan quarter is separate from that of the Hindus. The Brahman priests and the Muhammadan *mullahs* or preachers are ready to improve any occasion for a quarrel, and strife once aroused is not easily allayed. Among town-dwelling Muhammadans there is not that dense ignorance of Islamic history and doctrine that prevails in the villages. But an intelligent and in any way adequate knowledge of these subjects is possessed by very few

Indian Musulmans. Matters in this respect are improving, as education is becoming more general among the Muhammadan population of India. Until recently the backwardness in this respect of Indian Musulmans has made them to be lightly esteemed in the Moslem world.

It is a singular fact that though there are more Muhammadans in India than in any other country or empire, Indian Musulmans have at no time exerted an influence corresponding to their numbers either in India or upon the Islamic world at large. No great Islamic movement has originated in India. Indian Moslems are content, if of the Sunni sect, as the majority are, to look up to the Sultan of Turkey as their spiritual head; and, if Shias, to turn for guidance to Persian theologians and mystics. The reasons of this must be sought in history. India has never been a part of Islam. There were Muhammadan dynasties for centuries in southern India and for nearly two hundred years the Mughal empire was seated at Delhi; but the Muhammadan domination was superficial. The population remained Hindu, and the administration was to a great extent conducted by Hindu officials. The typical Islamic State should be religious throughout; a theocracy satisfied with nothing less than the dominance of Islamic

belief and practice. But the Mughal empire was a very secular affair. Babar and his Turkish amirs were men of the sword and the wine-cup. His successors were lax Musulmans in doctrine and practice. The greatest of them, Akbar, tried to substitute for the religion of Muhammad a pantheistic worship with himself as high-priest, in which Hindus and Moslems could join. The empire was wrecked by the futile attempt of Aurangzeb, the "great Muhammadan puritan," as he has been called, to establish a true Islamic state. In his failure the weakness of the nominal Muhammadan supremacy was revealed. In learning and peaceful pursuits the Muhammadan invaders and their converts were inferior to the Hindus. They remained as they began, men of war and action, with little aptitude for letters. In the prolonged anarchy of the eighteenth century, when the Mughal empire fell, there was still work and a living for them. But the fighting, though abundant, was of an ignoble order, in the service of half-Hinduised chiefs or of rough adventurers whose ambitions were limited to plunder. The British came and established peace, and thereby took away from the Muhammadans their best occupation. As British rule became more complex and more refined, the Muhammadan civil official had to give way to the better educated, more

industrious, and more pliant Hindu. When schools and colleges were established on a secular basis for the teaching of English and western sciences, the Muhammadans hung back while the Brahmans and the Hindu writer castes rushed in. Small wonder is it that among other secrets which the earthquake of the sepoy mutiny of 1857 revealed, the Muhammadan community was found to be depressed, discontented, and to a large extent actively or passively disloyal.

To readjust the balance between the two communities, to allay the apprehensions of the Muhammadans and to reconcile them to British rule, thus became a problem of the highest interest and importance. How pressing it was thought to be may be gathered from the title of a book published in 1871 by Sir William Hunter, which excited great attention at the time: *Our Indian Musulmans: Are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?* He described them as a source of chronic danger to the British power in India; and he examined at length the causes of the "spirit of unrest" which possessed them. No writer of Sir William Hunter's calibre would now dream of asking and discussing such a question. The problem may, therefore, be regarded as no longer pressing. Why this should be so is due to three causes. First, to the happy effect of

the measures taken by the British Government for the improvement of Muhammadan education and for securing to Musulmans a fair share in the public service. Secondly, to the rise of a school of liberal-minded reformers in the Muhammadan community itself, frankly accepting British dominion in India as a lawful government on account of its just and tolerant principles, and welcoming western education. Thirdly, to the apprehensions of the Muhammadan community that Hindu ambitions and the programme of Hindu politicians implied Hindu supremacy. These apprehensions were quickened by the measures taken in 1909 by Lord Minto and Lord Morley to liberalise the Indian administrative system by associating the people more closely with the government. No question in connection with this scheme of constitutional reform caused greater difficulty or led to sharper controversy than the claims preferred by the Muhammadan community for separate and adequate representation in the new councils. In the end, as the Muhammadans themselves admit, their claims were very liberally dealt with. The apprehensions behind these claims still exist and will affect Indian politics for some time to come. It is not surprising, though it may be regretted, that Muhammadans regard themselves as a separate community with separate interests. In Europe

we expect that sectarian differences, however acute, will be subordinated to nationality. In India religion takes the place of nationality As Lord Morley said in the House of Lords on the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill, "the difference between Muhammadanism and Hinduism is not a mere difference of articles of religious faith or dogma. It is a difference in life, in tradition, in history, in all the social things as well as articles of belief that constitute a community."

CHAPTER VI

ECONOMIC LIFE

Few subjects have been more often discussed or have led to sharper controversies than the economic condition of the people of India. Are they much worse off than the population of the British Isles? Are they becoming poorer or richer? How far is their increasing poverty or increasing prosperity due to the government under which they live?

Nothing is more difficult than to gauge the economic condition of the inhabitants of a foreign country by external circumstances. Sir Frederick Treves, in his account of a tour in the East, has recorded the first impressions made on him by India and its people. He speaks of the multitude of men, women and children "a little below the most meagre comfort and a little above the nearest reach of starvation." The country, he says, "looks homeless." It leaves "an impression of poorness and melancholy." "The villages

are piteous clusters of mud walls, daubed round the sides of a thick pond in the bare earth." On the other hand, SIR JOHN STRACHEY, recording the results of a long acquaintance with the country in his *India, Its Administration and Progress*, wrote: "There can be no question that in times of ordinary prosperity there is, in proportion to the population, more want and extreme misery in our own country than in India." The Indian peasant's cottage, he said, "affords clean and, according to his ideas, comfortable shelter. He has not much clothing, but much is not wanted; in the winter he suffers little from the cold. In ordinary circumstances he has sufficient food of the only kind he desires, the produce of his own fields or garden, his millets and lentils, his barley or his rice, his much-appreciated ghee made from the milk of cows or buffaloes, the vegetables, spices and condiments of which in a hot climate there is no lack, and as much tobacco, sugar and sweetmeats as he can afford to buy. . . . His wife has often her holiday attire and her silver ornaments, for after providing the necessities of life there is frequently something left for simple luxuries and for buying jewellery, the latter a common form of hoarding."

Assuming that there is an element of truth in both these accounts, we see that they

describe a state of society which to English eyes is almost inconceivably simple and elementary, destitute of comforts and conveniences that we are accustomed to regard as essential to civilised life. And yet this society is not uncivilised, is not incompatible with home affections and interests, and is not devoid of simple pleasures and enjoyments.

If we turn from personal observations to records of a more general kind, we observe some broad economic facts which require to be taken note of and accounted for; the more so as they seem at first sight to be inconsistent with each other. On the one hand we see a standard of living and a rate of wages which to Europeans seem incredibly low, and we frequently hear of disastrous droughts and famines and of measures of relief on an enormous scale. On the other hand, we are told on good authority that the foreign trade of India is rapidly growing; that year by year there is a larger import of commodities; that the goods and passenger traffic of the railways steadily increases; that irrigation is extending; that large industries are springing up and crying for labour; that the population absorbs large quantities of gold and silver; that it is better dressed and better housed than in former days, and that in years when the crops are

poor and trade is bad, it shows unexpected ability to support itself. How are these anomalies to be explained?

Let us look somewhat more closely into the facts. The total population of India, including that of the protected native states, is three hundred and fifteen millions. Three-fourths of this vast population is supported by agriculture. The area under cultivation is not accurately known, as the returns from the native States are incomplete. But we shall not be far wrong if we assume that there is less than one acre of cultivated land per head of total population, and not more than one acre and a quarter per head for that portion of the population which is directly supported by agriculture. One more fact must be mentioned to bring out the full significance of these figures. Not only does the land of India provide food for this great population, for with the exception of some sugar no food is imported from other countries, but a very considerable portion of it is set apart for growing produce which is exported. India supplies the whole world with jute. Its cotton crop is the second largest in the world. It sends abroad very large quantities of rice, wheat and oil-seeds. In fact, it pays its bill for imports of merchandise and treasure, and discharges its other international debts, mainly by the sale of agricultural produce.

Subtracting the land thus utilised for supplying foreign markets from the total area under cultivation, we shall find that what is left over does not represent more than two-thirds of an acre per head of the total Indian population. India, therefore, feeds and to some extent clothes its population from what two-thirds of an acre per head can produce. There is probably no country in the world where the land is required to do so much. That it manages to discharge the heavy task put upon it is due to three things. First, the great fertility of large tracts where either the rainfall is abundant or irrigation is provided; secondly, the unremitting labour and skill of the Indian cultivator; and thirdly, great economy in the consumption of food.

It may also be inferred that the average income of the peasant cultivators is very small. The net profit obtainable from an acre of land seems to us altogether inadequate for one person's support; and our conclusion would be the same if we take a family of five, namely, two adults and three children, and a holding of five acres, as the unit. But according to Indian ideas and a traditional standard of very thrifty and frugal living, five acres of good irrigated land will support such a family comfortably. The peasant has no labour bill, as he and his family work the

holding. He pays no rent for his cottage of sun-dried bricks and thatch, which he himself builds, and which he from time to time rebuilds or repairs. He pays no rates or taxes. If he owns his land he will have to pay land revenue to the State; and this represents a moderate tithe of about a twelfth or less of the produce. If he is a tenant-farmer, the rent will be at least double the amount of the land-tax. Of his other cash outgoings the cost and feed of a yoke of oxen will probably be the largest item. The death of a bullock, as may be imagined, is a great calamity, trying severely his resources or even necessitating resort to the money-lender. But a five-acre holding of good land, well worked, will yield enough to satisfy all these demands, provide simple food for the family, and a modicum of spare cash for clothes and other household expenses. If he is in debt to the grain-dealer or bania, he may be hard put to it to make both ends meet. But if he is clear of debt, as not infrequently happens, he will probably accumulate rupees, which he will either bury as a hoard or convert into jewellery.

But all the land in India is not good and irrigated, and every peasant's holding is not a five-acre plot. Some peasants hold considerably more than five acres; consequently others hold less. And when we get down to

the man who holds less than five acres of land and that of poor quality, then there is want and a hard struggle for existence. That man and his household are poor even in the Indian sense of the term.

Below the peasant class there is a large class of landless folk, who also find support from the land by working for the well-to-do cultivators in return for a daily or monthly wage. They form a well-recognised part of the village community, and poor and poorly remunerated as they no doubt are, it is the traditional duty as well as the interest of the landholding class to see them through bad times. There are also other residents of the village who do not actually cultivate land, but yet are indirectly supported from it. Such are the village potter, the village blacksmith and carpenter who make ploughs and other agricultural implements, the barber, the cobbler or leather-worker, the washerman, the watchman. All these receive doles of fixed amounts from the grain heap at harvest time, and other dues and perquisites. Throughout the year a stream of charity flows unceasingly from all the households in proportion to their several means. The unostentatious benevolence of all grades of society is one of the most beautiful traits of Indian life. It is not confined to the countryside, though it finds its best expression

there where each village has its own infirm and aged poor, its own destitute orphans, its own beggars and even its own " work-shy " impostors. In the West the poor-law and the state have largely taken over charity of this kind. In the East it is still a religious duty, and along with the strength and sanctity of the ties of family and caste it makes a poor-law unnecessary. In no respect does India differ more profoundly from England than in this. Save in time of drought and scarcity there is no public system of poor relief.

No one would pretend that this Indian village life is ideal, or unaccompanied by much that is distressing to the humane mind to contemplate. The wastage of life, especially child and infant life, is great. Diseases which in England have given way before sanitary and medical science, improved dwellings and better habits of life, stalk abroad. Plague, the mysterious and loathsome disease which the English people knew in the fourteenth century as the Black Death, has in India in fourteen years carried off seven million people, or more than the whole population of " greater " London. Cholera, small-pox, malarial fevers are endemic in the country, and collectively destroy lives by the million. The " preventable mortality " is in one sense great, but it is not " preventable "

by any ordinary means within the power of the state. European principles of medicine are represented by the public hospitals and dispensaries which are dotted over the country and which relieve a vast amount of sickness and suffering. But the great majority of Indian people die without medical aid. That the population continues to increase is a sign that the forces of life are stronger than those of destruction. But the resigned pessimism and quiet melancholy which characterise the religions and the mental outlook of the people, and which seem to brood over the landscape and infect the atmosphere, are not without a physical basis.

Such in broad outline is the structure of rural life throughout India. It is the life led by nine-tenths of the population. Only the remaining tenth live in towns with over five thousand inhabitants. We hear of the great cities of India but they can almost be counted on the fingers of two hands. There are not ten cities and towns in India with populations exceeding two hundred thousand. Of these four are maritime towns whose creation is largely due to British capital and commerce, four (Delhi, Lahore, Lucknow, Ahmadabad) are the capitals of former dynasties, while one (Benares) is the holy city of Hinduism. Contrast this with England, where ninety per cent. of the population live

in towns containing ten thousand inhabitants and upwards, and twenty-five per cent. in towns with over two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. In England agriculture is only one of six or seven great industries, while the wealth it yields is small relatively to the aggregate national income. In India outside Bombay and Calcutta wealth where it exists is derived from the rentals of large estates. In northern India, especially in Bengal and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, there are great landlords whose incomes are large even in the English sense and whose estates extend to many thousands of acres. They are intermediaries between the state, the traditional owner of the soil in India as in other eastern countries, and the peasant or the village community. How they came into existence is a story too long to tell here. Some of them represent chieftainships, just as some Scottish landlords to-day are the representatives of former chiefs of highland clans. Others are the descendants of revenue farmers who in the days of the Mughal government were granted tracts of country on condition of collecting the land assessment from the cultivators and accounting for the proceeds to the imperial treasury. In whichever of these ways their present estates originated, their position relatively to the cultivators has been enormously strengthened

and their wealth increased by the advent of British rule and English legal ideas of land-ownership. Under native rule they were treated well if they were allowed to keep one-tenth of what they collected from the cultivators. Under British rule they are allowed to retain about one-half; and where as in Bengal their payments to the state have been permanently fixed, they have been greatly enriched by the rise of rents and the extension of cultivation in their estates. Whatever view be taken of the general considerations for or against tenancy laws for the protection of tenants and for limiting the power of the landlords, the claim of the Indian cultivators to such protection is undeniably strong. The claim has been recognised by the Indian government, which has repeatedly legislated on their behalf. In every province the powers of the landlord to raise his tenant's rent or to evict him are now closely restricted by law.

We have incidentally mentioned "the village community," and have described it as a self-contained society, having its group of cultivators, its field labourers, its village artisans and officials and its grain dealer and money lender. The Indian village community, with its bond of joint responsibility and its curious customs about the common lands and about the distribution of the arable land,

has been the subject of much learned disquisition. Its strength and power of survival in troublous times have also excited great admiration. Sir Charles Metcalfe, a very distinguished Indian administrator, writing in 1830 of Indian village communities said, "They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh, English, are all masters in turn; but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves; a hostile army passes through the country; the village communities collect their cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation be directed against themselves and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance; but when the storm is over they return and resume their occupations. . . . A generation may pass away but the succeeding generation will return. . This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom

and independence." The Indian village community is obviously an ancient institution. It takes us back to days when the unit of society was the real or fictitiously enlarged family under the rule of the nearest direct descendant in the male line of a reputed common ancestor. But as SIR THEODORE MORISON has pointed out in his *Economic Transition of India*, the peculiar features of the Indian village community have existed in other countries and can be assigned to certain economic causes. Thus in ancient France village communities were jointly liable for the payment of the King's taxes and apportioned the amount among the individual members. They also had village watchmen and village herdsmen who were paid by contributions from the peasant occupiers in proportion to their respective incomes. The economic independence and self-sufficing organisation of the Indian village have resulted from its isolation in the past, and this isolation was due to poor and unsafe communications. Under the native governments there were no high roads for wheeled traffic and no means of marketing bulky and perishable commodities. Travelling was also unsafe, for there were no police, and war and brigandage were the normal condition of the country. Each village had to stand alone, and required its own staff of servants, labourers and

artisans. The population was distributed among isolated villages, and this prevented the efficient distribution of labour. Every European country has passed through the same phase. But whereas in Europe the transition was made and local isolation broken down one hundred or one hundred and fifty years ago, in India the change did not commence until the middle of the nineteenth century. It is only within the last thirty years that railways have become at all widespread in India, and good roads were few fifty years ago. The isolated and economically independent village has thus survived in India long after its disappearance from Europe. It is the landmark of an archaic system of society which is only now beginning to pass away. "A modern town," Sir Theodore Morison writes, "such as the bulk of the English people live in, depends for its very existence from week to week upon a complicated system of distant exchanges, and the characteristic of the modern structure of society is the interdependence of the different industrial units; the characteristic of the archaic economy is the isolation and the independence of the village which is the industrial unit of that type of society." We have had experience of the confusion and industrial paralysis produced in England by a three days' partial railway strike. In India

all the railways might stop for a month without disturbing the even tenor of the life of many a village community.

We are now in a position to appreciate the significance of "famine" in India. A country that depends almost entirely on agriculture carries its eggs in one basket. If the crops are bad, its one industry ceases to produce and everybody feels the effect. Indian agriculture depends, as has already been explained, on the seasonal or "monsoon" rains, and these rains occasionally are insufficient or fail entirely. Sometimes the failure is confined to a small tract of country: at other times a vast area is involved. But on no one occasion have the rains failed over the whole continent. This last fact is important, for it means that the food grown even in the worst years together with the unconsumed surplus of previous years is sufficient for the needs of the country for a twelvemonth. But this assumes that it can be readily carried long distances. In old days this was not the case. Each village was isolated, and each region was still more completely isolated. An extensive drought in these circumstances was an irremediable disaster. There were no means of combating it. Famine in the fullest and most dreadful sense of the word overtook the population. The more fortunate individuals or village communities might have

reserved stocks of food sufficient to maintain themselves but most of the inhabitants either died or dragged themselves miserably to places beyond the famine zone. If we had a complete record of the fortunes of an Indian village during the last three hundred years, we should probably find that its population had ever and anon been blotted out by some terrible drought.

A famine in this sense is no longer possible in India. The word is retained in official and popular language, but it now merely means a drought and the absence of employment and dearness of food resulting therefrom. It does not mean that there is no food and that multitudes will starve to death. The cause of these changed and improved conditions must be sought in the railway and canal construction policy pursued by the British Indian government during the last forty years. There are now thirty-one thousand miles of railway and twenty-three million acres of canal irrigated land in India. These figures mean two things. The canals mean that in the worst year a vast area is placed beyond the reach of drought and produces food. The railways mean that the food produced on the irrigated lands and in the more distant regions not affected by the drought will be conveyed with speed and security to the drought afflicted districts. To use a

military metaphor, the railways and canals now enable the Indian government to come to the relief of a population beleaguered by drought in any part of India. The key to the position lay in the food supply. Now that this position has been carried, the precise method of relieving the distressed population is merely a question of tactics. The plan adopted is to provide employment and wages by opening extensive public works for the able-bodied residents of the villages who are temporarily thrown out of work by the stoppage of agriculture, and to relieve the young, the old and the infirm gratuitously. A famine-relief campaign of this kind is a very great and arduous undertaking, and could not be carried through successfully if the whole scheme of operations had not been thought out in all its details, and all arrangements made beforehand. This has been done in each province, and the results embodied in a "famine-code," an inexact term which really means the regulations for the relief of distress in seasons of scarcity. A famine relief campaign is also a costly affair, and may run into a bill of two or three millions sterling. But as such relief is now as much a part of the ordinary business of the state as poor-law relief in England, a sinking fund (called the "famine-insurance grant") sufficient to meet the probable expenditure over a

series of years is provided in the annual estimates.

Thus the Indian population is now protected against the extreme severities of drought. Drought, as experienced in India, must still necessarily cause much privation, great destruction of wealth in the form of ungarnered crops, and some rise, though no longer a marked rise, in the death rate. But the village communities are kept together instead of being swept away as they were in old days, and the injury done to the agriculture of a province is repaired on the advent of the next good monsoon. Under native governments famine was one of the several checks constantly operating to keep down the growth of the population. Under British rule war and anarchy have long ceased, while the destructive edge of famine has been blunted. Has then the population increased greatly, and is it tending to outrun the means of subsistence? In the last thirty years the population of India as a whole has increased about twenty per cent. or by more than fifty million. It is now three hundred and fifteen million. The figures are portentous in magnitude. For a population of this size there is certainly not a livelihood according to the standard of western Europe under the present industrial conditions of India. But it may safely be said that there is a better

livelihood to-day for the present population than there was thirty years ago for the then population. In other words the production of India, agricultural and industrial, has increased faster than the population. In its railway and irrigation policy the Indian government has done more than merely protect the country from drought. It has increased its productive powers. In the Punjab some millions of acres of highly fertile land, lying outside the monsoon zone on the confines of the great Indian desert and formerly bare and desolate, have been transmuted into rich irrigation colonies. At the same time railways have opened large and distant markets to the cultivator. In other provinces a like impulse has been given to the extension of the arable area and to the cultivation of valuable crops. India thereby has been able both to feed its increased population and in years of average prosperity to export upwards of £100,000,000 of food grains, fibres, oil-seeds, or the manufactured products thereof, to foreign countries.

The industrial revolution in India may be said to be beginning. So far its effects have been most felt in the country's principal industry, agriculture. The village community of the past is losing its isolation and its economic independence. It is beginning to produce for distant markets and is being drawn

into the ocean of international commerce. The change is not without its dangers, and there are those who view it with regret. But it is inevitable and it is on the whole fraught with good. Labour has already become more mobile, and thereby more efficient. Mining and modern manufacturing industries have taken root at various points on or near the seaboard and at specially favoured centres in the interior. Among these industries it is sufficient to mention gold and coal-mining, cotton and jute power-mills, tea and coffee planting. These and other industries are steadily growing. They have created an active labour market, and the competition for labour has undoubtedly raised the wages of unskilled and skilled labour throughout the country. Ten years ago field labour could be had for twopence a day in upper India. The wage is now doubled and in many places trebled. The wage of a skilled blacksmith or carpenter has risen in a still greater degree. Those who know India best are most confident about its industrial progress.

The answer therefore to the questions raised at the beginning of this section is that the Indian standard of living is not that of western Europe. It is lower; but poverty is a relative term, and the difference of standards in such a comparison is not merely

one of degree but of quality. The Indian standard, such as it is, has risen since the establishment of British rule, and the improvement is due to that rule. It is still rising, and as far as one can see it will continue to rise.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH INDIA

The government of British India is a government of a dependency of the British Crown. As such its powers are derived from and defined by Parliament, and it may therefore be called a derivative government. A government of this type is not national in origin, nor is it autonomous. But India is a continent without nationalities, and for seven hundred years it has either been under foreign rulers or plunged in anarchy. Its vast territory has been incessantly split up and parcelled out among foreign conquerors and contending dynasties; its population is internally divided to a degree unparalleled elsewhere even in Asia. British rule in India can find a good title, as the lawyers say, in the conditions preceding it. It succeeded to the Mughal empire in the last throes of dissolution. It was welcomed by the Indian peoples, who co-operated willingly in promoting its dominion, and whom it saved from the anarchy

which was grievously wasting them. It is to this day accepted by the peoples and princes of India as the best government of which they have knowledge, and as freely admitting them to its councils and to responsible office. All the subordinate and much of the superior work of the administration is performed by Indians. In that sense the government of British India is a national government.

The evolution of this government is one of the most remarkable chapters of political history. We have seen that in 1858 an Act was passed by Parliament transferring the government of India from the East India Company to the Crown, and that Queen Victoria's memorable Proclamation of November 1, 1858, which has been justly called the Magna Carta of India, announced to the peoples of India the principles on which British rule would be conducted. And if we are content to start from this point, we can point to a series of Acts of Parliament building up the present fabric of the Indian government. But unless we go further back, half the contrivances which this fabric exhibits are not intelligible to us. We should not know how they came into being or for what purpose. Again, we should be ignorant of the process by which the Crown of England acquired this great dominion beyond the seas. What says

the Queen's Proclamation on this point? It says that the Crown with the advice and consent of Parliament had resolved to take upon itself the government of the territories in India, "heretofore administered in trust for us by the Honourable East India Company." What does this mean? How came a trading company to be the trustee for the Crown of a great dependency?

A comprehensive legal phrase like "trust" is sometimes used to cover a doubtful position. In the third quarter of the eighteenth century the British people and Parliament awoke to the fact that the East India Company had become possessed of an immense territory in India, where it was exercising sovereign rights, raising armies, making peace and war, and generally incurring responsibilities too vast for a trading association. The Company claimed to hold its territorial acquisitions as its private property, and at first Parliament was not disposed to challenge seriously the claim, but contented itself with exacting for the British treasury an annual tribute of £400,000. But the Company's debts and the confusion of its affairs in India re-opened the question, and convinced the nation that a radical reform was necessary. The remedy devised by Parliament was Lord North's famous Regulating Act of 1773, which

remodelled the governing body of the Company, established a Governor-General and council for Bengal, and set up a supreme court of justice in Calcutta. It was under this Act that Warren Hastings was appointed Governor-General. The Act was a sign that Parliament recognised a national responsibility for the empire created by the Company, but it left the question of ownership unsettled. It left the Company in possession of its territories and revenues for the term of its charter.

The *Regulating* Act proved to be seriously defective. Warren Hastings had unexpected difficulties with his council and with the supreme court, and was plunged through no fault of his own into a series of exhausting wars with the Mahrattas and other native states. The affairs of the Company were constantly before Parliament, and formed the occasion for much party warfare, culminating in the impeachment and trial of Warren Hastings. Whig and Tory statesmen alike recognised that the Company's exercise of sovereign powers was a danger to England, and that a complete change of system was imperatively required. They differed as to how the change should be effected. Was the Company to be put on one side, and the government and patronage of India vested in the ministry of the day? Or was the

Company still to administer and appoint to offices, while being brought under the supervision and control of the ministry? The second alternative was followed by Pitt in his famous Act of 1784.

The constitution created by Pitt is known as the "double government" system. It endured with some minor changes till 1858, when the Crown assumed the direct government of India; and many of its features have been retained in the present constitution of the Indian government. Its importance therefore can hardly be over-rated. The essence of the "double government" system was that the substance of authority passed from the Company to the Crown. The Company reigned but in important matters did not govern. It retained the patronage in respect of Indian appointments, though the approval of the Crown was required to the appointment of the Governor-General, the Governors of Madras and Bombay, and the Commander-in-Chief. The real authority in important matters was vested in a Board of Control. This Board consisted of six privy councillors (nominees, of course, of the ministry), but its powers were virtually exercised by its President, who was a cabinet minister. The Board saw all the correspondence from India, and no order could be sent to India by the Court of Directors without its approval. The Board

could also draw up orders and require the Court to send them to India. Further, there was a special arrangement by which the Board could send to India and receive from India correspondence marked "secret" without the contents being made known to the Court of Directors. Under this system the home ministry was virtually responsible for the policy pursued in India, and became accountable for the same to Parliament. It left the detailed administration to the Company, but as it had a final voice in the selection of the Governor-General, it could make sure that the person appointed to that high office was at one with it on large questions of policy. In that sense he was a "parliamentary" Governor-General, because he was the choice of the ministry, and the ministry was responsible to Parliament for his acts.

From the passing of Pitt's Act of 1784 the East India Company may be said to have administered India as "trustees for the Crown," though the phrase was not used until a much later date. It is so used in the Act of 1833 renewing the Company's charter on the condition, among others, that it ceased to be a trading association in India. Pitt's system retained the Governor-General and his council as the supreme executive authority, but gave the former the right to over-

rule his council if occasion required. The Governor-General in Council was also given the power to make laws, at first in an informal way under the name of "regulations," but subsequently in the form of Acts and with the formalities of a legislature.

It is obvious that the double government system could be altered at any time into direct single government by the Crown with little difficulty. When the change was determined on after the mutiny, a Secretary of State for India took the place of the President of the Board of Control, and was given the assistance of a council, the members of which, as regards Indian experience, took the place of the Court of Directors. In India the system of government was not affected. The Governor-General in Council remained, and the Governor-General continued to be a "parliamentary" Governor-General, responsible to Parliament through the medium of the ministry. In its immediate effect the change in fact was one rather of spirit than in the actual structure of the government. In the words of King Edward's Proclamation, "it sealed the unity of Indian government and opened a new era." It was the visible sign of the incorporation of India into the British empire. It brought the Indian peoples and princes into immediate relations with the Crown and

gave a direct objective to their loyalty. It was a pledge that the government would be administered with a sole eye to their benefit. It was also a pledge that their rights and privileges would be scrupulously maintained, their religions and customs respected, and that they would be freely and impartially admitted to offices in the public service

Since 1858 many changes have been made in the system of Indian administration, but the main structure is unaltered. These changes may generally be ascribed to three causes—the ever-growing mass of business and increasing duties of the administration, the necessity for decentralising the government, and the policy of giving the Indian people a larger voice and a larger share in the management of public affairs. The central or supreme government in India is that of the Governor-General in Council. It is commonly spoken of as " the Government of India," to distinguish it from the local governments. In 1858 the council consisted of four " ordinary " or full-time members, the Commander-in-Chief being usually added as a fifth or " extraordinary " member. Owing to the growth of business the ordinary members have now been increased to six. But this is not the full extent of the change. In 1858 the council worked as a collective

body. Now each member has his own department, and disposes of the great bulk of the work as a departmental minister, only the most important questions being reserved for consideration by the Governor-General in Council. In other words the departmental and cabinet system of our government and of other modern governments has been established in India with the happiest results as regards economy of labour and despatch of business.

A much more important change or constitutional development is found in the rise of the legislative council of the Governor-General. The supreme law-making power for India is Parliament. But Parliament has wisely contented itself with settling the framework or, as a continental statesman would say, the " organic laws " of government in India, and with delegating to a legislative body in India the power of making detailed laws subject to the approval of the Crown. The problem has always been as to how this legislative body should be constituted. There are cogent reasons why an autocratic government with powers derived from an external source, such as the Indian government is, should have a prevailing voice in the making of the laws which it administers. But clearly it should not have the sole voice ; the voice of the people should also be heard. Parlia-

ment therefore began in 1861 in a tentative way to lay the foundations in India of a deliberative assembly to which the function of making laws should be entrusted. It enacted that the Governor-General and his executive council might, under certain conditions, sit as a legislative council, one of these conditions being the addition of twelve purely "legislative" members, of whom six at least were to be persons not in the public service. The tiny plant of those days has since grown into a large and vigorous assembly. The legislative council of the Governor-General now contains in all sixty-six members, of whom thirty are non-officials. The latter are either returned by specified electorates or are otherwise the representatives of specified classes. The legislative council is no longer confined to the work of making laws. It debates the detailed provisions of the annual budget estimates, and divides on resolutions concerning these. Its members may put questions to the executive government. They may move resolutions on matters of public interest, and debate and take divisions upon them. In these ways the legislative council is now associated with the government in the general work of the administration. Its attitude is necessarily that of a critic, though by no means always an unfriendly critic. If its presence keeps the executive authorities on

their mettle, they are given an opportunity which they greatly value of putting the government case in debate before the council. A clean-handed and efficient government has generally a good defence for its policy, and need not fear its critics if it can meet them fairly in debate. The experience of the last two years (Lord Morley's Indian Councils Act was enacted by Parliament in 1909) is distinctly satisfactory in this and other respects. The enlarged council has brought the executive government nearer to the people, and has made its motives more intelligible to them. But the legislative council is not a Parliament. Its powers have been strictly limited by the British Parliament, from whom they are derived. It cannot turn out the executive government, it cannot stop supplies, it cannot enforce the resolutions that it passes. For all that it exercises a great and salutary influence on the general administration as an organ of public opinion. It shapes the laws of the country, and it can propose new laws to meet the needs of a progressive society. An interesting case in point is the bill for establishing a partial system of compulsory elementary education which Mr. Gokhale, the leader of the Indian national party in the council, has recently introduced. During the recent recess its distinguished author has toured through the country and has addressed

many public meetings, with the very proper object of explaining the provisions of the measure and conciliating opinion in its favour, just as we are accustomed to see public men in this country do in a similar case. This is an instance of the quickening effect which the recent constitutional reforms are exercising over public life in India.

The Government of India, as the supreme executive authority in India, exercises its powers in two ways. Certain departments of the state it keeps in its own hands and directly administers : others it has made over to the local governments : and in respect of these it contents itself with supervision and general control. In the former class are included the army and defence of the country, political relations with foreign states, the management of the finances, the currency and the debt, the railways, the post and telegraphs. The second class virtually includes the general internal administration of the country. In 1833 British India consisted of the three provinces, or presidencies as they were called, of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay. The Governor-General in Council administered Bengal and had a controlling power over the governments of the other presidencies. Now there are eight important governments, including Madras and Bombay, besides the

two frontier chief commissionerships. Madras and Bombay are under what is called council government, namely, a Governor appointed by the Crown, and an executive council of three members. In Bengal the Lieutenant-Governor has recently been given an executive council of two members. Four other provinces—the Punjab, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, Eastern Bengal and Assam, Burma—are governed by a Lieutenant-Governor without an executive council. In each of these seven provinces there is a provincial legislative council, modelled on the lines of the legislative council of the Governor-General, and empowered to discuss the provincial finances and other administrative matters relating to the province. These provincial councils are of considerable size; they consist largely of unofficial members representing constituencies or classes; within certain limits they make the laws of their respective provinces; and they are the mouthpiece of the educated community, such as at present it is, of the province.

This system of a number of subordinate governments and of a central government for supervision and control recognises the fact that India is a continent and not a single country. No other arrangement would be practicable. At first sight it seems to resemble the plan

adopted in uniting the provinces of Canada in the Dominion Government and the Australian Colonies in the Commonwealth of Australia. But there is an important difference. In the Canadian and Australian cases the separate colonies existed before union was thought of. Their rights had to be carefully defined and safeguarded by the Act of Parliament incorporating them into a union. The federal government thus created is based on a constitutional law which cannot be changed except on certain strictly defined conditions. The case of India is different. There is no constitutional instrument determining the relation of the Government of India and the local governments. The Government of India has supreme and undivided authority, subject, of course, to the home government. It is a unitary and not a federal government. The local governments are its agents, and they derive their various powers from it. This does not mean that the local governments lead a precarious existence, enjoying independence one day and losing it the next. The Government of India and the home government believe too firmly in decentralisation for that to be possible. The process is steadily in the direction of enlarging the powers of the local governments, and the very fact that there is no written

constitution and that a mistake in one direction or the other can be repaired without political strife, makes advance the easier.

Let us see how the system actually works, taking first the case of finance. All the revenues of British India, whether collected by the local governments or by the central government, are paid into one exchequer. Of the total roughly one-third is made over to the local governments as their share. They have the spending of some twenty-six millions sterling out of seventy-eight millions. The share of the local governments is settled in the following manner. Certain heads of revenue have been made over entirely to them; of others they receive not less than one-half; others again belong entirely to the Government of India. Thus the Government of India retains all receipts from customs, railways, opium, posts, and telegraphs, and half the receipts from land revenue, excise, income-tax, stamps. The local governments manage the latter sources of revenue, and have a direct financial interest in developing them. As to expenditure, similar arrangements are observed. The Government of India defrays the cost of the railways and other departments directly managed by it; and shares with the local governments the cost of the land revenue

and other departments, the revenue of which is divided. The system may seem intricate, and in its details it is. But the broad principle is that the local governments meet the needs of the internal administration of the country from certain sources of revenue made over to them. It is their interest to develop these revenues and to expend them to the best advantage.

The local government touches the citizen at many points: the central government is far away. The local government dispenses patronage: creates and appoints to offices. It provides law courts and judges; medical men, hospitals and dispensaries; makes roads and bridges; helps struggling municipalities with grants for drainage and water-supply; regulates the collection of the revenue and sits in judgment on the conduct of the officials. To the ordinary citizen it is *the* government so far as he is concerned. Public feeling in India is therefore beginning to take shape in provincial moulds. The enlarged legislative councils which have been set up in the several provinces encourage this tendency. The local council discusses the provincial budget, and realises that more money could be locally spent with advantage. It sees that of the revenues collected in the province a large part goes to the central government and is spent on objects, such as national

defence, that do not directly concern the province. It does not question the necessity for such expenditure, but it is inclined to think that it might be met in some other way than from revenues collected in the province, or that other provinces have been more favourably treated. The growth of a public spirit provincial in its aims is an interesting fact in modern India. It has to be reckoned with in other matters than finance, as was seen in the case of the partition of Bengal.

The most distinctive feature in Indian administration is the "district." It is the administrative unit. Every province is divided into districts, each of which is of the size of one of the larger English counties. "In India," Sir John Strachey has said, in his book to which reference has been already made, "where an absolute government is administered by a small body of foreigners far more advanced in civilisation than the people of the country itself, the most essential condition of safety to the rulers, and of good government to the people, is that authority should be strong, and authority cannot be strong unless it is concentrated. In every district of British India the government has its representative, in whom all executive civil authority centres." This officer is usually called the "district magistrate and collector,"

and as a rule he is a member of the Indian civil service. He is the chief magistrate of the district, but he is a great deal more than a magistrate. He is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of the public peace, and for ensuring obedience to the laws. In most provinces he has authority over the police, and all the magisterial courts and jails are under his supervision. His title of collector is misleading. In England a "collector" is a petty officer who collects rates and taxes. In India the "collector" is the head of the general administration of the district. The term is full of history. It takes us back to the time of Clive and of Warren Hastings, when the right of collecting the revenues of Bengal was ceded to the Company, while the government of the province remained in native hands. The Company's officers were then collectors of the land revenue and nothing more. Later on, when the Company took over the administration of the province, the collector became responsible both for collecting the revenue and for the general administration of the district. The collection of the revenue is only one of his duties. He is concerned with every aspect of the land system, with the condition of agriculture, the health and well-being of the population, and the working of the district and borough councils. The local government

turns to him for information and advice on all questions. "Upon his energy and personal character," it has been said, "depends ultimately the efficiency of our Indian government."

The duties of government in India are in many respects much wider than in the United Kingdom. The British took over India in a state of economic nakedness. There were no roads, docks, harbours, canals, hospitals, schools, colleges, printing presses, or other requirements of civilised life, and neither the disposition nor the means on the part of the population to provide them. British rule had to play the part of a universal provider and special providence: and having started in that line it has continually extended its functions. "It manages a vast forest property, and is a large manufacturer of salt and opium. It owns the bulk of the railways in the country and directly manages a considerable portion of them; and it has constructed and maintains most of the important irrigation works. It owns and manages the postal and telegraph systems. It has the monopoly of note issue, and it alone can set the mints in motion. It acts for the most part as its own banker, and it occasionally makes temporary loans to presidency banks in times of financial stringency. With the co-operation of the Secretary of State it regulates the

discharge of the balance of trade as between India and the outside world, through the action of the India council's drawings. It lends money to municipalities, rural boards and agriculturists, and occasionally to the owners of historic estates." To these hybrid duties may be added those that spring from the prescriptive right of the ruling power to a share in the produce of the land. Save where (as in Bengal) the government has commuted the claim, it re-assesses from time to time the cash value of its share. This is called " making a settlement of the land revenue." It keeps up land surveys and registers in which every field, the name of the occupier, the crop, the rent are shown. It intervenes between landlords and tenants for the protection of the latter. It manages the estates of indebted or otherwise disqualified proprietors. In the Punjab and in some other tracts it prevents the transfer of land from the agricultural to the non-agricultural classes. Further, the state in India is directly responsible in a degree unknown in England for police, education, sanitation, medical relief, and ordinary public works. Lastly, in times of drought it undertakes " famine relief " measures on the scale of a great campaign.

Government so extensive as this means large establishments. Some three million persons

are returned in the census as employed in the public service. The majority of this army are merely petty local offices, such as village headmen, watchmen, or accountants. But the number of well paid responsible posts is very large, according to English ideas. Indians hold all but the highest posts, and their share in the latter is continually increasing. In 1903 of twenty-eight thousand posts carrying salaries of £60 a year and upwards, only six thousand five hundred were held by Europeans. This may be taken to represent the entire European element in the whole civil administration. The Indian civil service, which is recruited by open competition in England, consists of about twelve hundred and fifty members, of whom sixty-five are Indians. In every high court one or more of the judges are Indians. The executive council of the Governor General, and those of Bombay, Madras, Bengal, each contain an Indian member. These facts and figures give some idea of the extent to which the government of British India is carried on by the people of the country. In considering whether the European leaven is excessive, sufficient, or insufficient, it should be borne in mind that the administration is European in methods and in guiding principles, and that for many posts technical and professional qualifications are

required which Indians do not at present possess.

A word may be here said about the laws which are in force in India and the courts by which they are administered. How far do they observe the principles of European justice and morality? The question opens an interesting chapter of history. At first the British courts in Bengal administered native law. They found the Muhammadan criminal law universally in force, and applied it to Muhammadans and Hindus alike. In civil cases they applied the personal law of the parties. They also were guided by the principle that no act committed in consequence of a rule of caste in native families should be deemed a crime. This principle saved practices such as human sacrifice, exposure of children, the burning of widows, the burying alive of lepers. The Muhammadan criminal law also abounded in matter which was equally objectionable according to European ideas. By degrees the British courts shook themselves free from the worst features of native law. Suttee or widow burning in 1829 was definitely made a penal offence. But it was not until 1862, when the penal code was brought into force, that the procedure of the courts and a good deal of the substantive law began to conform generally to European ideas of morality. The penal code prohibits a good

many acts which were not offences in Muhammadan or Hindu eyes. It has taught a new morality. The law in this respect has been a schoolmaster. In civil matters, where family caste or religion is affected, the personal or law of the parties still applies. The Muhammadan retains his law of divorce, the Hindu his law about plurality of wives. There is opposition here between our ideas and those of the East, but it is too firmly rooted in radical differences of civilisation, religion and race to be removed by the law-giver. Of the Indian courts of law hard things are often said. It is said that they are expensive to the litigant and dilatory: that they are over-run by petty lawyers and very technical: that they administer a procedure and legal system which are far in advance of the need of poor and humble folk. These complaints are often made about courts of civil justice in other countries. They are no doubt true in part as regards the Indian courts. But the bitterest critic of the Indian courts is obliged to admit that the great majority of the Indian judges are now clean handed. This is a notable and most encouraging fact. It denotes a notable rise in the average level of public morality. It is due to education, to the moral teaching of the penal code, and to the example set by European public servants. It is also due to adequate salaries

and pensions, permanency of employment, and good prospects of advancement. The government in British India is a good master, and on the whole is well served.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NATIVE STATES

The Indian law codes contain two definitions of cardinal importance. One is "British India," the other "India." "British India" means all places and territories within the King's dominions which are governed by him through the Governor General in Council. "India" includes British India "together with any territories of any native prince or chief under the suzerainty of His Majesty, exercised through the Governor-General in Council." "British India" is under direct British rule. The portion outside British India which yet is India is not under direct British rule. It is occupied by native princes or chiefs whose position as regards the Crown is that of an inferior power to the suzerain or paramount power.

From this certain consequences follow. The laws made by the legislative councils in British India do not apply to the subjects of native princes. The law courts of British

India have no jurisdiction in their territories. Their subjects are not British subjects. Thus India contains a vast area which, in many respects, though not wholly, resembles foreign territory.

This circumstance is often forgotten when Indian questions are discussed. Often the discussion proceeds on the assumption that the whole of India is under direct British rule, and that the Governor-General in Council, with the sanction of the home government, can enforce throughout it a common policy. For example, persons who object to opium production in India have on occasions advocated the suppression by law of the industry throughout the country, forgetful of the fact that it is largely carried on in the territories of native chiefs, with whose territorial administration the British government does not interfere except on extraordinary and well-known grounds. Again political constitutions are sometimes proposed for India by extreme reformers that ignore the existence of the native states and would be quite incompatible with their continued existence. To attempt to turn the flank of this difficulty by suggesting that the native states might be left " outside " the scheme, presupposes great and widespread ignorance of the size and importance of these states, of their history and traditions, and of the

pledges given to their rulers by the British Government.

Some idea of the importance of the " native states " problem is conveyed by the following figures. The native states occupy one-third of the area of the Indian continent and contain seventy-seven millions of the three hundred and fifteen millions of persons comprising its total population. But these figures do not convey an adequate idea of the delicacy and difficulty of the task which the existence of these states and the maintenance of healthy relations with them imposes on the British government and its officers. The states vary greatly in size, in resources and civilisation, in the character of their peoples and chiefs, and in the amount of independence which by treaty or usage the latter enjoy in the internal administration of their territories. In the case of the larger states the British government in ordinary circumstances rarely interferes. In the Bombay presidency there are clusters of tiny states, many of which individually consist of only one or two villages. In the hill country around Simla similar groups of petty states are found. In such cases the exercise by the chief of sovereign powers over his subjects, if allowed at all, is carefully controlled by British officers. In such states politics are of a humble order. An anecdote used to be current at Simla that the super-

intendent of the hill states was one day waited upon by the peasant headmen of a state, who, producing a key, explained that they had deposed their raja and had locked him up in his bedroom. They had come to seek advice as to the next stage in a properly conducted revolution. At the other end of the scale are large states that would form respectable minor kingdoms in Europe. The dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad or the state of Kashmir are each nearly as large as the mainland of Italy. Hyderabad concains twelve millions of inhabitants; Kashmir three millions; Mysore, nearly six millions; Gwalior, Jaipur and Travancore about three millions each; Baroda and Jodhpur over two millions each. Others have populations ranging from one to two millions. In these states there is a more or less regular system of administration modelled on the system existing in British districts. Usually there is a prime minister, who in Hindu states is called the *diwan*, and in Muhammadan states the *wazir* or some equivalent name. There are other ministers in charge of different departments, a supreme court of justice, and district officers. The ministers and judges are sometimes Indians borrowed from the public service of a British province, and such men bring with them the principles and methods of modern govern-

ment. Under their guidance the largest states have adopted in a more or less modified and simplified form the penal code of British India, the procedure codes and some of the substantive laws. Experiments in representative institutions have also here and there been made, though they are not allowed to go far. In Mysore and Travancore a representative assembly is convened for a few days every year, is addressed by the diwan, is permitted to talk on public questions, and is then dismissed. In Baroda a beginning has been made with a legislative council. But the dominant note in native states is the absolutism of the ruler. In states of the Rajput type, where the chief is the head of the clan and the nobles are his blood-relations, it is qualified to some extent by their privileges and prescriptive rights. But in states of the ordinary type the ruler is the state, though he may choose to rule by deputies. At any time he may elect to put them aside and to take up the reins: while some of the ablest princes of India have always kept the detailed administration of their states in their own hands with advantage to their subjects. A wise and good chief finds an inexhaustible pleasure in the task of ruling. No one disputes his authority or can turn him out of office. The state is his patrimony, and if he improves it, the benefits endure to his posterity.

How come native states to exist in modern India? How is it that we find these blocks of semi-foreign territory in a vast continent where British rule is incontestably supreme? If they are the relics of a submerged society, as they seem to be, to what do they owe their preservation? An answer to these questions will be attempted, though it must necessarily be of a concise and general character. In his *British Dominion in India* Sir Alfred Lyall has observed that "the present form and constitution of the British empire in India with its vast provinces and numerous feudatories represents historically the gradual incorporation under one dominion of states that have submitted and states that have been forcibly subdued." Broadly speaking, the states that were subdued are now included in British India, and the states that submitted are now the native states of India. But exceptions to this general statement have to be noted. Some states made their submission in the first instance and were admitted to treaty rights, but were afterwards annexed to the British dominions for special reasons. Thus the Mahratta state of Nagpur "lapsed," as it is termed, to the Crown in 1853 on the death of the chief without male issue; and the King of Oudh was deposed and his territories were annexed in 1856 on the ground of intolerable misgovernment. On the other

hand some of the present native states were forcibly subdued, but afterwards were for reasons of policy re-established under other rulers and exist to this day. The most important instance is that of the Mysore state. Early in the eighteenth century the ancient Hindu dynasty that had long possessed this state was overthrown by a Muhammadan adventurer, who founded a military kingdom and waged war with the East India Company and neighbouring native powers. His policy was continued by his son, the famous Tipu Sultan, who threw in his lot with the French and was for thirty years the inveterate enemy of the Company, and a standing menace to the peace of southern India. In 1799 he was defeated and slain, and his territories were occupied by the British forces. It was thought right to restore the old Hindu dynasty, and the present native state of Mysore owes its existence to the conquerors' generosity. Subject to such exceptions, which are not numerous, the native states to-day represent states which submitted to British rule and accepted the terms offered to them.

It has already been said that there are no nationalities in India, and that its population is made up of multifarious groups living under their own personal law and special rules of conduct. We must be careful therefore not

to read into the term "native states" a larger meaning than it possesses. The term does not imply that these states are Indian nationalities which have survived in a continent otherwise under foreign dominion. It means nothing more than a state not under direct British rule. The ruler may be and often is as much a foreigner to the people whom he rules as is an Englishman. Even in those cases in which, as in the Rajput states, the chief is descended from an ancient dynasty and is the hereditary head of a military clan, the mass of the population of his state does not belong to the clan and is outside its organisation. But the Rajput chief and his clansmen at all events represent an ancient political society; and in that sense the Rajput states may be said to stand for the principle of nationality. The same may also be said of the interesting group of Sikh states, such as Patiala and Nabha, existing in the eastern Punjab; and more doubtfully of the ancient Hindu dynasties which survive to this day in the native states of Travancore, Mysore, and in one or two others. In all these cases, it is to be noted, the British government stood between these states and destruction. They were on the point of being destroyed, and in some cases they actually had been absorbed, by other and more powerful military powers of which India in the eighteenth century was

full. Mysore, as has already been said, was reconstituted as a Hindu state by the British on the suppression of the Muhammadan usurper, Tipu Sultan. Travancore was rescued from the same marauding hands. A few years later, at the earnest request of the ancient chiefs of Rajputana, the British government stepped in between them and the predatory Mahratta powers of central India, and extending to them the shelter of the British alliance saved them from being utterly destroyed by Scindia and Holkar. In the same way the Sikh chiefships of the eastern Punjab were saved from the rude military empire built up in the Punjab by Ranjit Singh in the first half of the nineteenth century. It has with perfect truth been said that where in India "indigenous political institutions of long standing still exist, it is the English who saved them from destruction." In those parts of India out of which the British dominions were formed by the East India Company, there were no such institutions remaining. They had been swept away by Muhammadan rule, which in its effects has been likened to a steam roller. The provinces which the Company acquired were the wreckage of the Mughal empire, lying at the disposal of the first comer who could keep them.

The largest states existing to-day, as well

as many smaller ones, represent spoil picked out of this wreckage by successful military leaders in the troublous times of the eighteenth century. Of these the more important are the Muhammadan state of Hyderabad in the Deccan and the Mahratta states of Gwalior, Holkar and Baroda in central India. The Hyderabad state represents the last remnant of Mughal rule in the south, for as has already been mentioned an ancestor of the present ruler was the *nizam* or viceroy of the Delhi emperors in the Deccan. He threw off his allegiance when the Mughal sceptre passed to feeble hands, and when the British appeared on the stage in southern India he was an independent Muhammadan potentate, ruling over a Hindu population by means of a mercenary army, largely consisting of Arabs. Circumstances brought his state at an early date into equal and friendly alliance with the Company, and the Nizams have long ranked among the most loyal feudatories of the empire. On all critical occasions the late Nizam (died August 29, 1911) was foremost to proclaim his personal devotion to the throne and his contentment with British rule. As the premier prince of India and the accepted head of orthodox Islamism in India his words and his attitude have had a great and salutary influence on the whole body of Indian Muham-

madans. The Mahratta states now represented by Scindia at Gwalior, Holkar at Indore, and the Gaikwar at Baroda, arose about the same time as the Hyderabad state. Their founders were of the Mahratta race, which, issuing from the fastnesses of the western Ghats under the leadership of Sivaji, pulled down the decayed fabric of Mughal rule in the south and then swept over central and northern India, pillaging and exacting tribute. The ancestors of Scindia Holkar and the Gaikwar were successful chiefs in the Mahratta confederacy over which the Brahman Peshwa or hereditary prime minister of the house of Sivaji presided. They possessed themselves of extensive tracts of country and asserted a general right on the strength of a rescript extorted from the captive Delhi emperor to levy tribute throughout the empire. They were essentially "robber" powers, whose idea of rule was to occupy a province with mercenary bands and extract the last farthing from the wretched cultivators. Between them and the British lasting peace on equal terms was impossible. The armies that they maintained by the proceeds of pillage made them for half a century formidable antagonists, and a long and complicated struggle, extending to every part of India and involving the fortunes of other minor native powers, ensued before they were subdued and accepted

British supremacy. A partial settlement was made in 1804 after Sir Arthur Wellesley's victories over their forces at Assaye and Argaon. But they were left with large possessions and armaments, and were allowed a free hand in their dealings with other native states in the interior of the country with which the Company as yet had no connection. At length it was found necessary to bring intolerable misrule and licence to an end by a complete political settlement of central India. This was accomplished in 1817 by Lord Moira, afterwards the Marquis of Hastings. The Rajput and other minor chiefs were placed under the immediate protection and guarantee of the British Indian government. The Mahratta states were disarmed, pacified and shut up within carefully defined limits. The roving bands of freebooters that had for years harried the country were dispersed or exterminated. The struggle with the Sikhs had yet to come; but it was postponed for thirty years. Elsewhere throughout the Indian continent the British power was now beyond dispute the paramount power. Its right and duty to keep the peace of India were now universally recognised. "Henceforward it became the universal principle of public policy that every state in India should make over the control of its foreign relations to the British government, should

submit all external disputes to British arbitration, and should defer to British advice regarding internal management as far as might be necessary." This is the keystone of the Indian political system.

Two other examples of the various elements composing the native states of India may be given. The Kashmir state is Muhammadan in population, but the reigning dynasty is Hindu. Once an outpost province of the Mughal empire it was seized by the Afghans on the dissolution of the empire. Ranjit Singh, in building up his Sikh kingdom, turned the Afghans out of Kashmir, and granted it as a fief to one of his generals. The British, on the conclusion of the first Sikh war, left the grantee in possession of his fief and admitted him into alliance with them; and the present ruler of Kashmir is descended from the Sikh general. Tonk is a small state in Rajputana. It represents the booty of an Afghan freebooter who for years roamed at large through central India at the head of a regular army of foot, horse and guns. In the general pacification of 1818 he was guaranteed by the British government the lands which his descendants now hold, as the price of disbanding his troops and settling down to peaceful pursuits as a native ruler of a native state.

The origin of Afghan rule in the Rampur state in the United Provinces and in the Bhopal state in central India was very similar, though these dynasties are of earlier date.

The nature of the tie between the native states and the British government may now be considered. Is the tie regulated by international or by constitutional law? Do the chiefs exercise the rights of sovereign powers, or do they merely occupy a privileged position conceded to them by the King in Parliament? Are their territories part of the dominions of Great Britain, or external to them? These are theoretical questions about which eminent authorities have agreed to differ. They are difficult because the relations of the native states to the Crown have arisen in different ways, because the powers and liberties of the states differ very widely, because the British government has never clearly defined the position, and because no exact guide is furnished by history or by any other country. Also we may say that the controversy is largely one of words and not of substance. It turns on what is meant by "sovereignty." Some authorities hold that "sovereignty" must be independent and unfettered, and is not divisible. Others assert that sovereignty can be shared by two parties, and that there is such a thing as "semi-sovereignty." If the

first view is right, the native chiefs are not in the position of sovereign powers. If the second view is right, it is permissible to regard them as " semi-sovereign." The second view would seem to fit the facts better. The facts not in dispute are these. The British government is unquestionably the paramount power in India. All native chiefs acknowledge its supremacy and owe to it allegiance and loyalty. No chief enjoys complete external and internal sovereignty. No chief can declare war or peace, or can negotiate with any other chief, much less with a foreign state. All chiefs owe obedience to the paramount power, and must accept the advice of the resident or other authority representing it. Its decision has to be accepted as final. Disobedience pushed to extremes becomes rebellion and may lead to the chief being deposed. The paramount power determines all questions of succession to chiefships and no succession is complete until sanctioned. It is both the right and the duty of the paramount power to interfere to prevent oppression and gross misrule and to take such steps as may be necessary to that end. The paramount power is the source of honours; it regulates precedence, fixes salutes, grants titles and dignities. Lastly, the principles of international law do not apply to its relations with the states.

The native princes, on the other hand, or the more considerable of them, exercise powers that are usually regarded as sovereign. They make the laws of their own states, they appoint the judges and the executive officers, they levy taxes, they inflict punishments on their subjects. They and their subjects are not under the jurisdiction of the courts of British India, nor do the laws of British India run in their territories.

It seems consistent with these mutual relations to regard the native princes as in a position of semi-sovereignty, and this view finds support in the utterances of Parliament and of the Crown, and in the treaties in which the present union originated. Parliament in divers statutes has spoken of "the territories of any native prince or chief under the suzerainty of her Majesty," and of "the dominions of princes and states in India in alliance with her Majesty." The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 announced to the native princes of India "that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the East India Company are by us accepted and will be scrupulously maintained"; and this promise is repeated by Parliament in the statute of 1858 putting an end to the Company's rule, which enacted that "all treaties made by the said Company shall be binding on her Majesty."

As the tie commenced in treaties entered into by native rulers who were admittedly independent sovereigns, the idea of semi-sovereignty is naturally more agreeable to the descendants of those men than that of a purely Parliamentary or constitutional title.

Sentiment apart, the rights and privileges of the princes and chiefs of India are what usage, precedent and the interpretation of treaties more or less ancient have made them, and the surest guarantee that they will not be diminished lies in the declared policy of the paramount power. Time was when the sovereignty of native rulers of India was ampler and less fettered than it is to-day, but licence only brought destruction. The earliest treaties speak of "reciprocal friendship" and "mutual alliance." The Company was struggling for bare existence, and saw in the Nizam of the Deccan and the Mahratta chiefs independent states with resources equal to or greater than its own. The policy impressed upon the Company by Parliament and by the Company on its Indian servants was to avoid increasing the Company's dominions. If the strong states absorbed their weaker neighbours that was of no consequence so long as the Company's territory was respected. The Company's business was to stake out and stay inside its own boundaries.

This policy has been called the policy of the "ring fence." It broke down because the facts were too strong for it. An ambitious and restless native ruler was usually not content with absorbing weak neighbours. He was sure to collide with the Company or with allies of the Company, and then he became a danger that had to be suppressed by war on a big scale. The policy of the "ring fence" received its final blow in 1818 when the Rajput chiefs had to be rescued from the grip of the "robber" states of the Mahratta confederacy, and the general pacification of central India undertaken. "Subordinate isolation" was the keynote of the new policy. The native states henceforth were made subordinate to the paramount power, and they were isolated from each other. They were required to reduce their armies, to submit all disputes to the British government, and to accept its decisions. But in respect of internal affairs there was to be no interference with the authority of the chiefs. In the event of extreme misrule the chief was liable to be deposed and his state annexed. But until he reached that point, he was not pulled up Under this system native rule went from bad to worse. The king of Oudh was deposed and his kingdom suppressed. It seemed to be only a question of time when the same fate would befall other considerable states. Many

officials, including Lord Dalhousie, were so impressed by the incurable viciousness of native rule that they welcomed every occasion for extinguishing it. For this reason, when a Hindu chief died without male issue the general rule was to refuse to allow an adopted son to succeed. The important states of Satara, Nagpur, and Jhansi in this way lapsed to the British Government. What with annexation on account of misrule and "lapse" on failure of heirs the outlook for native states was black. The upheaval of the great Indian mutiny and the transfer of India to the Crown led to a new and better policy.

This policy has been called the policy of "union and co-operation." The native states were no longer regarded as nuisances meriting removal. They were guaranteed security of existence, invited and assisted to undertake the task of self-improvement. The first step was to disarm suspicion and distrust. This was done by the Queen's Proclamation and by Lord Canning's "adoption sanads." A sanad is a royal warrant. Those granted by Lord Canning to the native chiefs of India gave them the assurance that the British Crown desired that their governments should be perpetuated, and to this end undertook to confirm in the case of Hindu states the succession of an adopted son; and in the

case of Muhammadan states any succession legitimate according to Muhammadan law. "Be assured," the sanad ended, "that nothing shall disturb the engagement just made to you so long as your house is loyal to the Crown, and faithful to the conditions of the treaties, grants and engagements which record its obligations to the British government."

Thus a great burden was removed from the minds of Indian princes. But time was necessary to satisfy them that the new policy would endure and be liberally interpreted. Was misrule to be made the occasion for annexation? If so, what house would long survive? The answer was given in the two test cases of Baroda and Mysore. In 1875 the chief of the Baroda state was deposed on account of notorious misconduct and gross misgovernment. His issue was excluded from the succession. The state might have been annexed, but as a special favour the widow of the chief's predecessor was permitted to adopt as her son a boy selected by the British government from the Gaikwar family. The boy was carefully educated, and during his prolonged minority the state was administered under the direct control of the resident by a staff of picked officials. The present ruler of Baroda owes his position to this act of clemency. It has already been mentioned

that on the overthrow of Tipu Sultan the old Hindu line of princes was restored in Mysore. The Chief thus installed proved incapable and drove his subjects into rebellion. He was set aside and the country was placed under the direct administration of British officials without being actually annexed. On his death in 1868 the British recognised his adopted son, a child of eight, as his successor. In 1881, when the boy attained his majority, the country was formally restored to him by a deed of transfer, which is often referred to as containing the most complete statement of the relations subsisting between the government of British India and its feudatories.

The maintenance of the states of Baroda and Mysore in circumstances favouring annexation went far to dispel the doubts of the Indian princes as to the intentions of the paramount power. These doubts were deeply rooted. The exclamation, "It will soon be all red," attributed to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of the Punjab, on being shown a map of India on which the Company's possessions were shown in that colour, represented for a long time after the Queen's Proclamation the innermost sentiment of native courts. Something more was needed to inspire not merely confidence, but warmth of feeling. A foreign Government may com-

mand respect, but so long as it is a colourless abstraction it does not excite affection. Parliament and the constitutional tie convey little to the oriental mind; but it readily responds to the ideas of a personal sovereign and loyalty to an ancient and exalted Crown. The gracious words of Queen Victoria's Proclamation touched the hearts and the imagination of the chiefs. The impression deepened as the long reign stretched into the half-century, and the personality of the great Queen beyond the seas grew more distinct. The assumption in 1877 of the title of "Empress of India" was in complete harmony with this sentiment, as was also the stately ceremonial of the Delhi Assemblage of the same year when the new title was proclaimed. "It is with the wish," said LORD LYTTON to the assembled chiefs, "to confirm the confidence and to perpetuate the intimacy of the relations now so happily uniting the British Crown and its feudatories and allies, that her Majesty has been graciously pleased to assume the Imperial title we proclaim to-day." The new title in no way altered the constitutional relations of the British government and the chiefs. But titles and ceremonies have their value as giving colour and warmth to commonplace relationships. There is no doubt that in the personal tie the princes and chiefs of India "found themselves," as it were.

It has given them a dignified and acceptable position in the empire, and it commands their loyalty and allegiance in a way that directly appeals to their most venerated traditions.

The position of an Indian prince is in many respects an enviable one. The more considerable princes have large and increasing revenues. They are exempt from the obligation of providing for the external defence of their states. They and their subjects enjoy all the material improvements that have been made in British India. They benefit from the railways, roads, harbours, telegraphs, postal and other services which the capital and credit of the British Indian government have created, and for which the subjects of that Government have paid. Beyond fixed tributes of very moderate amount they make no direct contribution to the British Indian treasury. They are secured in the peaceful possession of their states by the guarantee of the British government. They may govern as they please as long as they do not violently depart from the traditional standard of administration, or grossly misgovern. Their power is unfettered by constitutional checks, and their will absolute. In the management of their estates they have an ample field for healthy activity, and they have in their union with the paramount power a direct

interest in the larger affairs of the Indian empire. They are often invited to co-operate with the British Indian government in undertakings for the common good of India or a portion of India. Now it is a joint canal, now a railway serving their states and British districts, now a college or a postal or telegraph service. A wise and intelligent prince, and there are many such and the number increases, is as happily placed as regards public affairs as any statesman or potentate in the world.

There are no doubt drawbacks. The calm world has its cankers. Wars and forays and kingdom-snatching are no more. Subordinate union implies restraint, however light and delicate the chain may be. The British political officer or resident, who is the agent of the British Indian government, and the channel of communication between it and the native ruler, has to be kept informed of the affairs of the state, and has to advise the chief in a more or less authoritative manner. Often the relations of the resident and the chief are all that could be desired. The resident is the trusted friend and helpful counsellor. The chief has nothing to conceal or to be ashamed of, and the resident has no call nor wish to interfere, and is on good terms with all men. But sometimes matters are different, and then the curb is felt and

the situation is uncomfortable. The general policy of the Indian government and its agents is to interfere as little as possible with the internal administration of the states, and to overlook practices and methods which would not be tolerated in British districts. But as the level of morality, public and private, rises in British India, backward states show up more sharply and become more difficult to defend. "It is easy," said LORD MINTO, when as Viceroy he made a speech at the capital of the Udaipur state that was read as a gentle lecture to over-active residents, "to over-estimate the value of administrative efficiency," and he went on to say that "the methods sanctioned by tradition in states are usually well adapted to the needs and relations of the ruler and his people." The exceptions create the difficulty. In the past British residents have been unable to overlook torture, nose-splitting and ear-lopping, flogging to death and other inhuman practices having the sanction of tradition in certain states. And though such excesses are rare now, the march of progress in India as a whole is constantly exposing deficiencies in the administration of states that refuse to move with the times.

M. JOSEPH CHAILLY, in his *Administrative Problems of British India*, has divided

the Indian princes into three classes: the intensely conservative, narrow-minded prince who entrenches himself in the customs and privileges of his ancestors and refuses to reform; the enthusiastic "young India" chiefs, who discard their own vernaculars for English, abandon their natural dress, forsake their religion and its consecrated practices, and cross the sea every two or three years in spite of caste rules; and the moderate "young India" chiefs, who advance more cautiously, reverence and defend religion and caste, and admit of no change which would be in conflict with its institutions. The latter, he says, "only ask from Europe its material institutions, its educational methods, and, it may be, its philanthropic morality; at bottom they remain Indians, whether Hindus, Musulmans or Sikhs." His conclusion is that the pace towards progress will be that of the moderate "young India" party, advancing slowly and steadily, without violent movement to the front or to the rear. This is precisely what the best friends of the princes and chiefs, who value their conservative influence upon Indian society, and admire them as the natural product of the country, would desire. To retain that influence in a moving India there must needs be some advance. M. CHAILLY's cautious statement that "there has been substantial

progress in the administration of several of the more advanced states"; and that "these states and their chiefs are showing themselves accessible to sentiments of praise and blame," is fully warranted by the facts.

CHAPTER IX

ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

A CIVILISED government, by which is meant a government which keeps steadily in view the welfare of its subjects and works for their betterment on a settled plan, is never without its problems and its difficulties. Of these the Indian government has its full share. Some of these are common to civilised and progressive rule as such; others are peculiar to British rule in India.

A general idea of these problems may be gathered from what has been said in the preceding sections regarding the past of India and the present condition of its peoples. In a rough classification they fall into three groups; problems of external defence, problems of internal administration and problems of political or constitutional development.

For many years the existence of British rule in India was bound up with the problem of external defence. The primary care of the British was to obtain and hold defensible

frontiers. At first they were sought within India itself, but as British dominion grew, the lines of defence were pushed beyond India proper towards Afghanistan and Persia on the west, and Siam and the French possessions on the east. From time to time all other matters of government have had to be subordinated to the imperious needs of external defence. These needs still make heavy calls upon the finances of the country. The insurance of the peace of three hundred millions of people is not a small affair. Happily of late years the course of events in Afghanistan and Russia has been favourable to the security of India, and for the present at least the problem of external defence may be said to be satisfactorily met.

Recent changes and improvements have made the Indian army one of the most efficient in the world. Its distribution over the vast area which it holds is the result of the most careful thought, and its armaments and equipment are in accordance with the latest military ideas. The problems that it suggests are not concerned with the possibility of making it a more efficient force, but with its strength, its composition and its cost. The regular army in India consists of about two hundred and thirty-five thousand men, British troops being to native troops in the proportion of one to two. Judged by

European standards, it is one of the smallest armies in the world for the duties which it has to perform, these duties being to preserve international peace and to defend India against aggression. Many military experts consider it dangerously small. On the other hand, it is from its composition necessarily an expensive army, and its composition could not be altered without danger to its efficiency. The ratio of one British soldier to two Indian soldiers is fundamental. To maintain a voluntary army of seventy-five thousand British troops—the present strength of the British army in India—means a good rate of pay and liberal concessions of various kinds, all costing money. The large staff of British officers required for these troops and for the native army has also to be raised on the voluntary system, and at market rates of pay. Thus the British element in the army in India is expensive. To increase it would increase recruiting difficulties in this country, besides largely adding to the military burdens of India. But without an increase in the British troops employed in India there can be no increase in the total strength of the regular army in India. The present strength has, therefore, to be regarded as a maximum, and the Indian government's chief concern is to satisfy civilian critics that the strength is not excessive. Some Indian

members of the Viceroy's legislative council, in their anxiety to see a larger part of the public revenues spent on education and other social services, question the necessity for the present scale of military expenditure. Their contention is that twenty-one millions sterling for the army out of a total public expenditure of seventy-eight millions sterling is disproportionate to the relative needs of external defence and internal administration. We may sympathise with the advocates of a small and cheap army, yet may doubt whether they fully realise the risks to which an insufficiently defended India would be exposed. A generation that has known peace only is apt to view it as a thing easily come by.

The defence of India is the defence of the north-west frontier. The possible sources of danger are three: the independent Pathan tribes interposed between British India and Afghanistan, the kingdom of Afghanistan, and the Russian empire. Speaking generally, the method of dealing with the problems involved in the defence of the frontier has been to isolate each danger spot and treat it separately. With Russia a treaty was made in 1907, which so long as it endures relieves India of anxiety from this quarter. With those of its provisions that relate to Persia we are not here concerned, except in so far as they prevent strife between England and

Russia which might react on India. Those relating to Afghanistan place that kingdom definitely within the sphere of British influence and renounce Russian ambitions in that direction. Afghanistan is thus isolated and can no longer play one of its great neighbours against the other. It is true that the treaty provisions regarding Afghanistan do not come formally into force until the assent of the Amir has been obtained, and that so far the Amir has not assented. But virtually they are in force, for the two governments are acting upon them. Lastly, between Afghanistan and British India a long stretch of mountainous country inhabited by tribes akin to the races of Afghanistan has, by an arrangement made in 1893 with the late Amir, been brought under British control and constituted a protectorate. They are thus isolated from Afghanistan, and though they are permitted to retain complete independence and indulge in blood-feuds, murder and tribal warfare to their hearts' content, the control is sufficient to keep the peace of the border and to allow the inflow of civilising influences. There are seasons of unrest when the independent tribes and their kinsmen in Afghanistan seem inclined to make common cause against the infidel in India, and to rush into war. Such a war would be a very serious matter, as the whole border land is now armed with

modern weapons as at no former time. But the influences making for peace are many and their strength increases. Viewed as a whole, the problems of the external defence of India do not at present give cause for anxiety.

The problems of internal administration, on the other hand, tend to become more urgent and more intricate. We may liken India when it came under British rule to a vast domain taken over in a state of complete dilapidation. It was without any of the appliances or furniture of a civilised state. The first efforts of the new rulers were directed to meeting its most pressing necessities. Codes of law, courts of justice, police and prisons, a trained civil service were gradually provided. Roads were made, and these were followed by railways, postal and telegraph services. Then the great rivers were taken in hand and made to provide irrigation on a scale far exceeding anything known in the world's history. Comparing India as it was at the time of the mutiny with present-day India, we might be inclined to say that its transformation into a modern state was now complete. But as an explorer may climb a hill only to find the prospect blocked by higher summits, so the Indian government as the result of its labours is faced by new demands and problems. It has met in a fairly satisfactory way the needs of a modern

state and prepared India for the industrial revolution which every progressive community must sooner or later pass through. The country can now pass, and in fact is now passing, from the simple agricultural stage to modern organised industries and world-wide commerce. But the transition both reveals defects and creates new wants. The Indian government is held responsible for these defects, and is expected to satisfy these wants.

The industrial change that is passing over India is of a twofold kind. In the first place, the agriculture of the village community is no longer governed by local conditions and restricted to supplying the requirements of the inhabitants or the immediate neighbourhood. Sixty years ago the wheat or cotton grown in the village was consumed locally. There were no roads, much less railways. Now thousands of tons of Indian produce are sold in London before it has actually been harvested. In the Punjab some millions of acres of once barren land in districts as rainless as Egypt have been brought under cultivation by means of great canals drawn from the snow-fed rivers, and everywhere else a similar speeding up of agriculture to supply the demands of distant countries may be observed. This marked change in the rural economy of India is due primarily

to canals and railways, secondly to an all-round improvement in trading facilities (harbours, docks, posts, and telegraphs), and thirdly, to the stimulus which peace and justice give to commercial enterprise.

The other and more important change is the rise of large modern industries in India. As yet these are confined to a few centres, but in the judgment of many persons the movement is but beginning. In and around Calcutta there are numerous jute mills rivalling those of Dundee, and in Bombay over two hundred cotton mills which compete successfully with those of Lancashire. In Burma there are many rice mills for the husking and polishing of rice, and in all parts of India small factories of different kinds are springing up. Coal is extensively mined in Bengal and in two other provinces, and a huge iron and steel plant is being put down in a district where inexhaustible quantities of good iron-stone exist. "The germ of manufacture on modern lines," SIR THEODORE MORISON writes, in describing the industrial transition of India, "has already been planted, and has shown a wonderful capacity to thrive in an Indian environment."

Changes of this kind coming over a population of more than three hundred millions create serious administrative problems. The change in agriculture has

affected many interests. Land has greatly increased in value. The great landlords desire higher rents; the trading and professional classes seek to acquire estates from the peasant proprietors. Two evils have arisen. The poor and ignorant cultivator is rack-rented or evicted. The peasant owner is induced to involve himself in debt and ultimately to part with his land. The problem of protecting the tenant against the landlord and the small owner against the money-lender is in some form or other always before the Indian government. Probably in no country has it been studied more closely or more frequently dealt with by legislation. There is a special reason for this over and above the importance of maintaining agriculture, the paramount industry of India, in a sound and healthy condition. The Indian government, in accordance with immemorial usage, is theoretically the owner of all land in India. It has relinquished a large part of its theoretical rights, and land is owned by private persons and is bought and sold as in this country. But it still retains the right to a share in the produce. This share is not defined by law and might be such as to absorb all the profits of agriculture and make private ownership valueless. Under former native governments (and still in some native states) this has actually

occurred. But in British India the government of its own free will has reduced its demand to a very moderate land-tax. The rules under which the "land revenue," as it is called, is assessed, are very technical and cannot here be described. But the broad result is that owners of land in India, after paying the land-tax, are left with very considerable profits. In the irrigation colonies of the Punjab, for instance, the selling price of land subject to the land-tax is £10 and upwards the acre. No one would give this price for land if the dues upon it were excessive. The policy of the Indian government is to keep the land assessment low for the encouragement of the cultivator and the small owner. But its policy would be nullified if owners of large estates were to rack-rent their tenants, or if the small owners were wheedled out of their ancestral acres by the money-lending classes. Therefore the government is always vigilant and ready to step in with protective laws. Each province has its special tenancy law, the general aim of which is to secure to the tenants fair rents and freedom from arbitrary eviction; and in some provinces, where the land is owned not by large landlords but by petty peasant proprietors, its transfer to the money-lending and trading castes is prohibited.

There are many other problems connected

with the land and the state's stake in it. The Indian cultivator has many good qualities, but he is often without sufficient capital and might make more of the land with better seed and appliances. The government lends him money, has started co-operative credit societies which promise well, and employs agricultural experts to instruct and advise him. Again, the periodical revision of the land assessments (they run from twenty to thirty years in the different provinces) is a serious and weighty undertaking. Moderate as these assessments are, the strict exaction of the land-tax in bad seasons would be ruinous to the small owner. The policy, therefore, is to postpone the collection of the tax in such seasons, or even to remit it. All this involves an immense amount of inspection and regulation. Very serious problems also arise in connection with the great irrigation canals that spread their branches over the face of the country, changing the character of the cultivation, the value of the land and the habits of the agriculturists. The settlement of a million colonists on the once desert lands of the Chenab canal in the south-western Punjab was an operation of infinite difficulty and responsibility. The revenue and the irrigation officers had to lay out fields and villages, select colonists of the proper class, settle the conditions on

which land would be granted, fix fair rates in payment of water supplied, establish markets and construct roads, found townships, and organise and set going a new society What was done on a large scale in the case of the Chenab canal is done on a smaller scale wherever the beneficent but disturbing influence of a new canal is felt. The revenue officer, as he is called, and his subordinates are much more than a tax-collecting agency They represent the state in its capacity as a co-owner and co-manager of the land of India. They are concerned with everything that affects the welfare of the occupiers of the public estate, or that tends to its improvement or detriment. No department of the state touches the peasant so closely or at so many points as the land revenue administration. And the Indian peasant, as Lord Curzon said in his farewell speech in Bombay, is " the bone and sinew of the country," the first and final object of the government's regard.

Another set of problems is created by the growth of trade and industries and the great overseas traffic of India. In the first place there is the problem of the overcrowded and insanitary city. It is serious enough in this country. It is much graver in Calcutta and Bombay. Into these and other large towns a poor and ignorant population has been rapidly drawn from country villages, with

little thought for its accommodation and decent living. Travellers have often described the almost inconceivable overcrowding and wretchedness of the "chawls" or tenement blocks of Bombay and the dismal squalor of Calcutta and Rangoon. Matters are improving, for the baneful results of past neglect are now recognised, and the government has come to the help of the municipal corporations with money and skilled advice, and has induced them to accept city improvement schemes on large and well-considered lines. But time has been lost and a great deal of leeway has to be made good. In other respects also the conditions of factory life in India are bad. The Indian factory hand is an agriculturist temporarily attracted to the town by relatively high wages. His object is to earn as much as he can within a short time, spend on himself as little as need be, and to return with his savings to his village. He is an easy victim to overtime and excessive hours, and will live uncomplainingly in the vilest hovel amid infinite dirt and discomfort. He is ignorant, weak, and unorganised. The inquiries of the Factory Labour Commission showed that in most Indian factories since the introduction of electric light the working hours had been grossly excessive, and child labour greatly abused. A new Factory Act has now definitely

fixed the hours of labour for all classes of operatives and in other ways improved their position. But very much remains to be done before the modern industries of India or the condition of life in the great towns can be regarded with satisfaction.

The insanitary and congested city is only a part of the general problem of the public health in India. The problem is raised with increasing persistence by the industrial development of the country. The now close connection of India with the outer world inevitably calls attention to its sanitary condition, and its sanitary condition is unfortunately bad. Time was when pestilence and epidemic disease in India were thought to affect India alone. Now they are matters of international concern. When plague or cholera is active in India, Europe grows restive and threatens to close its ports to Indian vessels or to subject them to strict quarantine. During the last fifteen years India has suffered from a terrible visitation of plague. Imported from China in 1896 the disease has fastened itself on the domestic rat of India, and is passed from these animals to human beings. It defies the efforts of the doctors, has occasioned upwards of seven million deaths, and has been the cause of unspeakable misery and wretchedness. An epidemic of the kind so protracted and so

widespread seems an outrage upon civilisation. It has added greatly to the strength of the outside demand that strenuous efforts should be made to improve the public health of India. But the problem is one of immense difficulty. At first sight the improvement of the Indian village seems a simple matter compared with the more complicated case of the cities. But it is not as easy as it looks. It is not merely a question of drainage or water supply, but of a radical change in the general standard of living and in the habits and prejudices of centuries. The money difficulty alone is formidable, but the social and political difficulty is greater. It has been said that the East does not particularly want our drain-pipes, and that its ideals of comfort and cleanliness are not ours. And yet without the co-operation of the people sanitary reform in rural India will make little progress. In this matter the Indian administration is between two fires. On the one side the commerce, the science, the humanity of Europe blame it for apathy and timidity. On the other hand, its own officers warn it that nothing is more unpopular with the masses than sanitary reform, and that no great improvement is possible until this attitude is changed.

How can this change be brought about? Mainly, it is believed, by means of education.

Of all administrative problems the improvement and diffusion of education in India is probably the one that at the present moment weighs most heavily with the government. Most of the difficulties which modern India presents have their roots in the ignorance or defective education of the people. The masses have far too little education; the education of the minority is gravely defective. "It cannot," said Lord Curzon, in addressing the educational conference convened by him at Simla in 1901, "be a right thing that three out of every four country villages should still be without a school, and that not much more than three million boys, or less than one-fifth of the total boys of school-going age, should be in receipt of primary education." And he put the urgency of the problem in the following words: "What is the greatest danger in India? What is the source of suspicion, superstition, outbreaks, crime, yes, and also of much of the agrarian discontent and suffering among the masses? It is ignorance. And what is the only antidote to ignorance? Knowledge. In proportion as we teach the masses, so shall we make their lot happier, and in proportion as they are happier, so they will become more useful members of the body politic." The impulse given by Lord Curzon to elementary education has led to a notable increase in the number

of schools. There are now nearly four million boys attending elementary schools. But this larger number still leaves some ten or twelve million boys to be accounted for, while the girl population of India is still practically uneducated. The figures convey some idea of the magnitude of the problem, but they do not adequately express its difficulty. Even if there were money and teachers enough to provide a school in every village, the inclination to make use of it would still have to be created among the masses. Rural India stoutly disbelieves in education. In the existing schools there are many vacant places solely because the peasant prefers to keep his sons at home, and dreads the effects of books on their habits and character. These conservative ideas are weakening and will weaken; but for the present they are an obstacle that none aware of the delicate task of ruling India would wish to ignore. Free, compulsory, universal education for the population of India is still a long way off. But it is an ideal that will have to be kept in sight and followed as time and circumstance permit, if India is to make the best of the new industrial conditions now opening to it.

Equally important and pressing is the problem of the reform of the higher education in India. The existing system is the frequent

subject of attack. It is said to be "mechanical, lifeless, perverted"; to fail to form character or to produce useful citizens; to be based on a low standard of teaching and a lower standard of learning; to encourage cram and to discourage thought. MR. H. R. JAMES, whose position and experience as the head of the presidency college, Calcutta, qualify him to speak with some authority, has examined these charges in a recent work, *Education and Statesmanship in India*, and maintains with some reason that they are unnecessarily severe, and that they do not sufficiently allow for the adverse conditions with which higher education in India has had to contend. But however that may be, MR. JAMES frankly admits the many serious deficiencies of Indian high schools and colleges and of the university system, and acknowledges that out of the reforms begun by Lord Curzon "has been born a new life for higher education in India." One of these reforms was the passing of an Act that remodelled the constitutions of the four Indian universities. Others were concerned with the improvement of the teaching, the buildings and the apparatus of the schools and colleges; with lightening the burden of the examination system, discouraging cram and making the courses of study more useful and more

intelligible to Indian students; and lastly, with better provision for scientific, engineering, medical and other technical instruction. Reforms of this kind are not completed in a day. The improvement of secondary and higher education in India has, in fact, only commenced. To carry it through will make large demands both on the government and on the public spirit of the community.

But better sanitation and better education do not exhaust the needs of new India. The progress of the country makes many other calls upon the administration. Now it is demanded that the police should be reconstituted and made more efficient; or it is complained that the courts of justice and the staff of judges are unable to cope with the volume of work before them, or that the revenue establishments are found to be overworked and underpaid; or again the hospitals and dispensaries are said to be below the standard of modern requirements. All these demands mean money. Behind all the special administrative problems is the fundamental problem of insufficient revenues. The Indian government is in the difficult position of having to meet the needs of a modern state from the slender resources of an oriental community. Taxation in India, judged by European standards, is very low. There are no death or estate duties. The land-tax is

not oppressive, not exceeding an average rate of two shillings the acre; and as a set off against it incomes derived from land or agriculture are exempt from income-tax. The latter tax at the rate of about sixpence in the pound consequently yields little. The remaining tax revenue is derived chiefly from drugs and alcohol, the customs duties at the ports, stamp duties on deeds and documents, and salt. The salt duty, which is often stigmatised as a peculiarly wrong and oppressive tax, has of late years been largely reduced, and now is less than one farthing the pound. The poor man pays in the course of the year between two and three pence on account of salt duty, and possibly threepence on account of customs duties on imported articles. If he does not drink and refrains from litigation, this is the extent of his taxation. Over the whole population, rich and poor, the taxation, exclusive of the land-tax, is less than two shillings a head. But light as this may seem, every farthing subtracted from incomes as small as those of the masses of the Indian population is seriously felt. This alone is a good reason for not adding to the present burden of taxation; while a second reason lies in the very limited range of possible taxes. It is certain that the Indian government could spend five or ten millions a year more than at present on education, sanitation and other social services.

Yet that sum could not be obtained without largely increasing the salt tax and the customs duties, both of which fall upon the general body of the population. The Indian government is thus on the horns of a dilemma. The field of administrative reforms and material progress is unlimited; the field of taxation is very restricted. As the revenue under each head is steadily growing with the growing wealth of the country, the future might be viewed with confidence but for one thing. In addition to the tax revenues of India the Indian government has long enjoyed large profits from the opium trade with China. Of late the profit has been about three millions a year. We need not enter into the question of the morality of this trade, as it will shortly be a thing of the past. The important point is that the Indian government at a time when it is hard pressed to find money for social services of every kind is about to sustain a serious loss of income. The gains may have been ill-gotten, but they have proved very useful in the past, and their loss will be felt.

The progress of what may be called the business undertakings of the Indian Government is fortunately not dependent on the taxation problem. Railways, canals, docks, harbours and the like are profit earning works for which money may properly be borrowed.

The credit of the Indian Government is good, and it is able to borrow money at a low rate of interest for its public works. The use of English capital on easy terms is one of the many advantages which India derives from the British connection. The remittance of interest to the foreign creditor is sometimes regarded as an injury to India, and is called a " drain " on its resources. But it is certain that the great undertakings which have been carried out in India by means of foreign capital have increased greatly the wealth of the country, and are no burden on the tax-payer. After payment of all interest charges the railways and canals of India give a net surplus to the state. The public debt of India, other than that incurred for profit-earning public works, is extremely small, and is yearly diminishing.

This account, necessarily brief and imperfect, of the more pressing problems of Indian internal administration, must suffice. A few words must be said about the constitutional problem.

British rule in India has been described as a gigantic machine for managing the entire public business of one-fifth of the inhabitants of the earth without their leave and without their help. The description has at no time been exact; it is now altogether incorrect. From the first the people have been associated

with the British power in the government of the country. The guidance and the driving force were of foreign origin, but they would have availed nothing without the willing and intelligent service of many thousands of Indians of all ranks and capacities. Though in form autocratic, the British Indian government has always been very sensitive to the sentiments, the interests, and even the prejudices of the people; the *people*, to use Lord Curzon's phrase, including the "patient, humble, silent millions" of peasants, the eighty per cent. of the population who have no policies and who read no newspapers. The British Indian government long tolerated *suttee* and female infanticide. It still tolerates social and religious practices that offend the conscience of Europe. It has rarely moved without first exploring the shallows and sounding the depths of Indian opinion. If it has sometimes seemed cold and critically disposed to proposed changes, it has reflected the traditional conservatism of the people at large.

Of recent years the active association of the governed with the government has greatly increased. The country is covered with a network of local and municipal boards and corporations, constituted on a representative basis and exercising self-governing powers. These bodies are not free from official control,

but the policy is to relax it as the level of public morality and public spirit rises. The educative effect of local self-government is very noticeable in the larger towns. A day spent in Calcutta or Bombay would reveal the extent to which local administration is in the hands of the community. The visitor would commence his studies at a meeting of the municipal corporation or the city improvement trust. He would pass to a sitting of the senate of the provincial university, and end with a debate in the provincial legislative council. He would find in these assemblies the Indians more numerous than the Europeans, complete freedom of debate, fearless criticism of the administration. The official view might possibly, in most cases, prevail, but not without modifications and concessions. He would conclude that Indians take a large, active and influential part in public affairs, and in the making of the laws under which they live. He would come to the further conclusion that though the government in its different branches is essentially government by officials, or a "bureaucracy," the vast majority of the officials are Indians.

The constitutional reforms associated with the names of Lord Minto and Lord Morley are the natural outgrowth of a continuous policy. That policy has been to associate

the people of India with the government more and more closely, as time and circumstance permitted, while since maintaining, in the common interest of India and England, the strength and unity of the executive power.

CHAPTER X

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In the last section we tried to dip, as it were, into the mind of the Indian government, and to get some idea of the problems that occupy its thoughts. To examine the collective mind of the Indian people and take stock of its contents is a far more difficult and delicate task. All that can be attempted is to indicate very briefly and generally the more important movements visible on the surface of the multitudinous life of India.

Society, religion, the state are the three influences to which each individual member of a community is hourly subject. They shape his life, his thoughts, and his aspirations. By society we mean what is sometimes called "social environment"; that is, the social system in which he finds his place and the economic conditions which determine his material well-being. The peculiarity of the social system of India is that it is regulated by the institution of "caste"; while the

economic conditions of India are those of an archaic agricultural community which is beginning to feel the impact of world-wide commerce, and in the midst of which modern industries are in the act of establishing themselves.

In western countries it is possible to distinguish social and economic forces from religious forces, and to estimate their effect separately; and generally it may be said that the former have a more direct influence than the latter, because they affect the larger part of life. In India it is difficult to make this distinction, as the whole structure of Indian society and to a large extent the economic conditions of Indian life are based upon religion. With us there is no necessary connection between a man's religion and his occupation or place in society. In India, at least among the Hindus who form the bulk of the population, caste determines each man's vocation, and his actions from the cradle to the grave; and caste as an institution is a bundle of religious precepts and prohibitions. We read in Tennyson's *In Memoriam* of the person "who breaks his birth's invidious bar"; No Hindu can do that. When we say that the average Indian is pre-eminent among civilised mankind for the tenacity with which he clings to his traditional "way of life," his *dharma* or established order, we

cannot distinguish between the social and the religious influences that bring about this result. It is largely due to caste that the earning power of Indians is low, and their circumstances often embarrassed. The high caste man may not drive a plough or keep a shop ; caste and religion make it obligatory that he should marry a wife before he can support a family, that he should find a husband for his daughter before she is grown up. Caste may forbid him to kill plague-infected rats in his house, and religion may require him to use a polluted well. It has been proved beyond all reasonable doubt that the malarial fevers which afflict the wealthiest quarter of the city of Bombay, and are sapping the vitality of the Parsi community, could be suppressed if the wells in the courtyards of the houses, which serve as breeding places for mosquitoes, were closed. Yet this very necessary and obvious improvement is obstructed because it is said that the ritual worship of the Hindus and Parsis cannot be properly performed with filtered water from the city mains.

The influences tending to keep the masses of the Indian population unprogressive and immobile and to check new movements of thought are very powerful. Are there any forces operating in the contrary direction ? We must seek them in the political system

and institutions of British rule, in the inflow of western civilisation, in the opening up of the country and the quickening of industrial life by railways, in the establishment of modern industries by European capital, and in the more frequent intercourse of India with the outer world. It is to be expected that in a great continent like India these influences would operate very unequally. Such indeed is the case. Their effect has been greatest in the large towns, especially in the maritime capitals, and among the professional and literary classes. They have led to the "unrest" of which unhappily so much has been heard during the last four years. The impression created by this "unrest" upon persons coming into contact with it for the first time is that the new forces have been too strong for the old social order and have fairly shattered it: religious beliefs and caste restraints, morals, sobriety and discipline seem to have been swept away by the sudden flood. But the symptoms in their extreme form exist in a very limited area and among a small section of the population. "It is almost a misnomer to speak of Indian unrest," MR. VALENTINE CHIROL has remarked in his powerful and deeply interesting book, *Indian Unrest*. There are vast numbers of Hindus, he goes on to say, who are unaffected by it. "These

include almost all the Hindu ruling chiefs and landed aristocracy, as well as the great mass of the agricultural classes, which form in all parts of India the overwhelming majority of the population. Very large areas, moreover, are still entirely free from unrest, which, except for a few sporadic outbreaks in other districts, has been hitherto mainly confined to three distinct areas—the Mahratta Deccan, which comprises a great part of the Bombay presidency and several districts of the Central Provinces, Bengal with the new province of Eastern Bengal, and the Punjab. In these regions it is the large cities that have been the real hot-beds of unrest, and great as is their influence it must not be forgotten that in India scarcely one-tenth of the population lives in cities, or even in small townships with more than five thousand inhabitants."

It is important to grasp the facts given in this passage as to the limited and localised character of Indian "unrest." They do not detract from its gravity where it exists. But they set it in its true perspective. They enable us to realise that there are vast tracts in the interior of the country where the disorders and crimes which have stained its course are absolutely unknown, and where less is heard or thought about them than in England.

We may follow Mr. Chirol in his account of the evolution of the extreme forms of Hindu unrest. He traces its first beginnings to the licence of the Indian newspaper press in the Mahratta country, of which Poona is the capital. This press is to a great extent controlled by Brahmans, and from historical causes the Brahmans of the Deccan have not as a body been well disposed to British ascendancy. With the licence of the press various popular movements were associated, based on appeals to racial or religious sentiments. Thus there was a movement against cow-killing which appealed to the religious feelings of the Hindu population and was directed equally against Muhammadans and Europeans. There was a movement to celebrate the birthday of Sivaji, the hero of the Mahratta race, and commemorate his exploits, among which was the treacherous murder of the representative of the Mughal emperor. These and other movements were given a religious colour by being placed under the patronage of the popular elephant-headed god Ganesh, whose annual festival is kept in every village in the Deccan. Their general effect was to excite active disaffection and to revive dreams of a Mahratta supremacy under Brahmanic direction. It is not alleged that the persons who took part in these movements necessarily foresaw whither they would lead,

or were advocates of physical force. But it is certain that with some of the leaders hatred of the British was a dominant passion, and that they transmitted it to a circle of ardent adherents.

In Bengal the direct causes of "unrest" were the partition of the province and the reform of the universities. It is outside the scope of this work to discuss the partition. Suffice to say, it was undertaken with the object of distributing between two governments the task of ruling eighty-five millions of people, and of giving to the eastern half of the province its proper share of attention and of public money. The reform of the universities was suspected as an attempt on the part of the government to control and curtail higher education and private educational enterprise. To combat these measures the leaders of the advanced party in Bengal borrowed from the Bombay presidency methods of agitation which closely approximated to those of physical force, and not unfrequently issued in the gravest crimes. Agitation in Bengal was given a religious sanction. It was placed under the protection of the goddess Kali. The youth of Bengal were exhorted to rally to the cause of the great "mother," whose land was being desecrated and whose heart was sore. Two words were invented, *swaraj* and *swadeshi*,

which exerted and still exert by their very indefiniteness a great influence on the emotional and imaginative Bengali character. *Swaraj* means self-government and *swadeshi* national industries. The latter as applied in Bengal included not only the legitimate fostering of home industries but the boycott by physical violence of imported goods. Both these objects were enforced by religious oaths, penances and ritual, and were advocated in the name of Kali. In Bengal as in Bombay a movement which originally started in discussion and in what may be called a constitutional manner passed into violent acts, outrages and diabolical crimes.

In the Punjab unrest in its extreme form had a very short life. There were riots at Rawalpindi and Lahore, which were promptly suppressed and were followed by the deportation of prominent leaders. The movement had a different origin from those of Bombay and Bengal and in many respects is deserving of sympathy. It arose from the doctrines preached in the Punjab by a religious reformer, Swami Dayanund (died 1883), and from the activities of the Arya Somaj, the sect founded by him. In the section on Religions an account has been given of the tenets of this society. It aims at purifying Hinduism and restoring the beliefs and practices of the

Vedic age. But the central doctrine "Arya for the Aryans" can readily be pushed to the point where it is inconsistent with acquiescence with British rule. It has the same effect on impulsive youth as the appeal in Bengal to the outraged feelings of the "mother goddess" or the "motherland." The disturbances in the Punjab were organised and led by members of the Arya Somaj, and the society has been accused of propagating active disaffection through its missionaries. Recently it has sought to clear itself with the government of the Punjab, and has given assurances that its aims are constitutional and its teaching confined to social and religious reform. Its centres are at Lahore and other large towns of the Punjab, and its adherents belong mainly to the professional and official classes. M. Joseph Chailley, while conceding its claim to be a reforming movement on the religious side, asserts that "it is really fanatical and obscurantist."

Reviewing these three extreme manifestations of unrest Mr. Chirol observes that the forces which underlie them have a common source. "They are the dominant forces of Hinduism—forces which go to the very root of a social and religious system than which none in the history of the human race has shown greater vitality and stability." The

movement is in fact a social and religious revival of Hinduism. Within legitimate limits it is a movement with which well-wishers of India may sympathise. In its extreme forms it is retrograde and allied with bigotry and superstition. "We have," SIR ALFRED LYALL remarked in his introduction to MR. CHIROL'S book, "the strange spectacle in certain parts of India of a party capable of resorting to methods which are both reactionary and revolutionary, of men who offer prayers and sacrifices to ferocious divinities and denounce the Government by seditious journalism, preaching primitive superstition in the very modern form of leading articles."

Probably at no time had the physical force movement the weight of educated Hindu opinion, even in the centres of unrest, on its side; though for a while the moderates were overborne by the advocates of violence or thought it prudent to acquiesce in acts which they did not approve. To-day the moderates are in possession of the field, and the extreme party is discredited and its real weakness in members and ability is revealed. Many factors have contributed to this result, not the least powerful being the new legislative councils and the measures taken for liberalising the constitution of the Indian government. The extreme claims of Hinduism have led to

counter claims on the part of the Muhammadans, and the wiser heads on both sides perceive that in a modern state there is no room for extreme religious pretensions. The idea of a return to Brahmanic supremacy and of an exclusively Hindu society is too opposed to the existing conditions of India to stand examination. It appears to have been quietly dropped by responsible political leaders along with other excesses of the period of violence.

Opinions naturally differ as to the causes of the passionate outbreak of hostility to British rule. Those who assign it primarily to the licence of the press attribute the state of the Indian newspaper press to a mistaken policy of higher education. "The rapid expansion of an educational system that has developed far in excess of the immediate purpose for which it was originally introduced, was bound to result in a great deal of disappointment for the vast number of Indians who regarded it merely as an avenue to government employ." Mr. Chirol adds: "Things have in fact reached this pitch that our educational system is now turning out year by year a semi-educated proletariat which is not only unemployed, but in many cases almost unemployable." Different views may be held both as to the extent of this overproduction of matriculated students, and as

to its bearing on disaffection. But there is no difference of opinion among thoughtful Indians as to the serious defects of the collegiate and university system, and as to the necessity for radical improvements. In this work the co-operation of Indians and Europeans is assured.

Mention may now be made of some of the constitutional and legitimate movements that are to be found in present-day India. The Indian National Congress claims the first place. It was founded about twenty-five years ago. Its object was to bring together in an annual assembly the leaders of Indian liberalism, irrespective of race and creed, for the discussion of political and social reforms and for formulating recommendations for the consideration of the Indian government. Originally it attracted the support of not a few Parsis and some Muhammadans. But gradually most of the Muhammadans dropped out, the Parsis have lost much of their authority, and the Congress is now predominently Hindu. Its members consist mostly of lawyers, doctors, schoolmasters, journalists. They are not returned by any definite constituent bodies, or by any formal process of election. They represent primarily themselves, and indirectly and in a general way the political ideas of the liberal and advanced sections of the Hindu pro-

fessional classes. The Congress has often been ridiculed by its enemies for assuming the title of " national " and for taking itself seriously as a " parliament." It is vulnerable in these respects. But undoubtedly it has acted as a centre and rallying point for Hindu politicians, it has drawn public men together from all parts of India and it has fashioned the habit of conferences and congresses. Of late years its existence has not been harmonious. Dissensions between the extremists and the moderates have interrupted its proceedings on several occasions, and in 1907 the meeting at Surat ended in riot and confusion. The enlarged legislative councils and other constitutional reforms have now diminished its importance, and there seems a disposition to regard it as having fulfilled its utility.

As the National Congress is the constitutional organ of progressive Hinduism, so the All-India Moslem League represents the political aspirations of the educated Muhammadan community in India. As its name implies, its activities extend throughout India. It has provincial branches, and also a branch in England. It was formed in 1906, in the early days of the political excitements generated by the partition of Bengal, and represented the natural anxiety of the Muhammadan community to secure a full hearing

for their political claims. Rightly or wrongly their leaders believed that any system of popular representation which did not make special provision for the Muhammadans as a separate community would be injurious to their interests. When the scheme for enlarging the legislative councils and introducing the elective element was proposed, this became a burning question. In the end considerable concessions were made to the Muhammadans, and they admit that they have secured adequate representation on the councils. The Moslem League has a large and varied programme at the annual meetings. The League seeks to secure separate representation for Muhammadans on district and municipal boards: to obtain a larger share of public offices; and to promote the special interests of the community wherever they are affected. It is too early to see how this new movement, which is necessarily sectarian in its aims, will shape. But the struggle over the constitutional question has undoubtedly quickened the corporate feelings of Indian Muhammadans. A Muhammadan university in India has long been the desire of their leaders. They have never been satisfied with a system of secular education from which the religious element is sedulously excluded. The Muhammadan college at Aligarh was established in response to this feeling more

than thirty years ago by a very enlightened man, Sir Syad Ahmad Khan. It has prospered exceedingly, and it has within it the germs of a teaching university. But the jump from a single college affiliated to the provincial university to a self-contained Muhammadan university is necessarily a very big one, and a few years ago any such project seemed impossible of realisation. Under the quickening influence of the new political life of India the Moslem community have now raised a considerable endowment fund, and have laid a comprehensive scheme before the Indian Government for a Muhammadan teaching university at Aligarh. It is a remarkable instance of public-spirited corporate action, and it illustrates the change that has come over modern India. There is no need to fear that the proposed university will run on narrow theological lines. It will start with the traditions of the Aligarh college behind it, and these have been consistently as liberal and enlightened as the mind of the great founder, a man worthy to rank with William of Wykeham and other venerated benefactors of our English and Scottish universities.

The National Congress in its origin contemplated social as well as political reform. But social reform has now been taken over by another body called the Indian National Social Conference, which holds an annual

meeting and in constitution and members closely resembles the National Congress. Like the latter it is predominantly Hindu. M. CHAILLEY thus describes its programme: "It includes on the social side the right to undertake distant voyages, suppression of child marriage (to which some would add that of elderly widowers with sons), the remarriage of widows, temperance, and morality. On the economic side it seeks training for industrial and commercial careers, and to attract capital and energy to the continuous development of national wealth, politics remaining definitely in the background. On the religious side it advocates fidelity to a Hinduism freed from the pagan scum that has come up to its surface; it desires no conversions to any form of Christianity."

This programme, with additions and variations, is repeated annually at provincial conferences. The number of these conferences is amazing. There are industrial conferences, temperance conferences, Parsi conferences, Jain conferences, Moslem and Hindu educational conferences, and many others. As the golf habit has fastened upon middle-aged and elderly persons in England, so the conference-going habit has settled on the educated Indian community. As a form of recreation the conference is not without its merits in an eastern

climate. But there is no trifling at these gatherings. Intense seriousness pervades them. The speeches often show signs of careful preparation and extensive reading, and occasionally rise to a high level of eloquence. It is sometimes said that in these conferences theory is in advance of practice, and that discourse fails to result in action. But this is a common defect of conferences all the world over. A juster observation is that the Indian mind in these discussions is seen moving among unfamiliar ideas. For centuries it has played with metaphysical speculations, with the riddles of spirit and matter, existence and non-existence. It is without experience of the problems with which the modern state is engrossed, the political, social, and industrial problems which are the every-day fare of our members of Parliament and municipal councillors. In time the acute and subtle Indian intellect will accommodate itself to the new order of ideas and will move freely among them. It will accumulate practical experiences, and deal with the concrete problems of civic life on the basis of ascertained and accepted facts. The conference as an institution will then have greater actuality. At present it rather tends to be a dialectical exercise.

The impression that this account of social and political movements in India is calculated

to create is that the country must be in a stage of rapid transformation, and the people in a state of intellectual tension. But the movement is confined to the educated classes of the towns, and mainly to the small fraction of the population that reads and speaks English. Out of three hundred and fifteen millions of inhabitants little more than one million have this knowledge. Nine-tenths of the population live in villages and pursue a stolid conservative agriculture. The members of the numerous conferences and congresses that sit at the provincial capitals at stated intervals are drawn from a very small body, and the same faces appear at the different meetings. There are thousands of villages in which no one takes in a vernacular newspaper. These old-world communities are little affected by the movements of city folk. They know nothing of popular representation, ballot-boxes, legislative councils, national congresses and other matters in which the lawyer and the journalist delight. They have a very moderate goodwill for the village school, to the inmates of which they contribute under considerable pressure a small percentage of their children. Their enthusiasm is reserved for the new temple with its four-handed figure of Vishnu which some wealthy grain-dealer is erecting as a thank-offering for a son, or for the delights of the annual pilgrimage to the sacred bathing-

pool where the footprint of the god is clearly stamped on the rocks. They submit to vaccination because it is prescribed; but they have greater faith in the efficacy of oblations to the goddess of small-pox. They hate social reform, which on its sanitary side is connected with taxes, fines and inspections, and on its ethical side involves breaches of caste-law and disrespect for tradition. Doubtless even the Indian village is changing and will change still more under the pressure of ideas from outside and of new necessities and desires. But the change will be very gradual. For many years the crust of custom will rest heavily upon its inhabitants, and they will resent being called upon to step out of their established order, their ancient way of life. "We have now," said Lord Morley, in an illuminating phrase in one of his speeches in the House of Lords on the Indian Councils bill, "as it were before us in that vast congeries of peoples we call India, a long slow march in uneven stages through all the centuries from the fifth to the twentieth." The more the continent is studied throughout its length and breadth, the more clearly will the essential truth of this picture be realised.

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